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ABSTRACT

School-based management is a reinvention and countermovement to a broader historical trend to centralize and standardize American education. The present study represents one component of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's project to investigate how schools in 12 member nations can most effectively respond to recent reforms. Chapter 1 examines the historical context of school-based management, focusing on the changing locus of control in American education. Despite the popularity of decentralized management, concurrent reforms at the district, state, and federal levels often constrain its full implementation and further the trend toward centralization. Chapter 2 introduces the underlying rationale and practice of school-based management reforms. Chapter 3 presents a plan for investigating school-based management in six school districts across the United States. Chapter 4 describes reform implementation in each district, and chapter 5 presents a cross-site comparative analysis of descriptive data. The final chapter reviews principal findings and provides recommendations for further reform efforts. Since school-based management is in an embryonic state, no final judgment concerning its effectiveness should be made. (Contains 113 references.) (MLH)

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SCHOOL–BASED MANAGEMENT: The Changing Locus of Control in American Public Education

February 1994

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PREFACE

Growing concern among educators, policymakers, parents, and other concerned citizens about how best to prepare America's youth for productive lives in the twenty-first century has given rise to a broad range of reform initiatives aimed at restructuring the nation's schools. Among these are initiatives involving the realignment of power relations among key stakeholders at the district and school levels. Alternatively referred to as school-based management, shared decision making, or, simply, decentralized management, this broad-based reform movement owes much of its present popularity to the success of analogous restructuring in the business community (Peters and Waterman, 1982) and to an impressive body of research on school effectiveness that identifies the school as the essential leverage point of reform (Purkey and Smith, 1985).

Historically, school-based management is neither a new idea nor a new practice. Decentralized control was the norm in American education from the beginning of public schooling to the turn of the twentieth century. Yet, during the past century, increasing centralization and standardization has taken hold, and school-based management has had to be all but "reinvented." While some would suggest that school-based management is simply the most recent incarnation of a characteristically weak countermovement to the broader historical trend toward centralization of control over the nation's schools (Clune and White, 1988), others see it as a critical turning point in American educational reform.

In several countries around the world, a similar trend toward decentralization of control over education has emerged in recent years. Because of growing international interest in this area, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is coordinating a project among 12 of its member states to investigate how schools can most effectively respond to recent reforms designed to enhance the effectiveness of schooling and of educational resource management. The present study, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Research, represents one component of that broader effort.

This report begins, in Chapter I, with an examination of the historical context of school-based management, focusing on the changing locus of control in American education. The underlying rationale and practice of school-based management reforms are then introduced in Chapter II. In Chapter III, an analysis plan for investigating school-based management in six school districts across the United States is presented. Chapter IV describes the implementation of reform in each of the six districts, and Chapter V presents a cross-site comparative analysis of the data derived from these descriptive accounts. Finally, Chapter VI reviews the study's principal findings and provides recommendations for future reform efforts.

CHAPTER I
THE CHANGING LOCUS OF CONTROL IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

This study begins by examining those public institutions most directly associated with change in the management and administration of American elementary and secondary schools over the course of the past two centuries. These include: (1) schools themselves, including administrators, teachers, and the parents and citizens they serve; (2) district-level institutions, such as local boards of education, district boards, superintendents, central office staff, and teachers' unions; (3) state-level authorities, including governors, state legislatures, state superintendents/commissioners, state departments of education, and state boards of education; and (4) at the Federal level, Congress, the courts, and the U.S. Department of Education.

Control and Influence over Education at the School Level

Prior to 1900, individual schools in the United States were controlled by professional educators — i.e., principals and teachers — and self-contained boards of education associated with each school. The local boards of education, composed of parents and citizens, were responsible for administrative and policy decisions involved in running their respective schools (Marburger, 1985), while day-to-day management fell to teachers, or, in the case of multi-classroom schools, principal-teachers (Taylor and Levine, 1991). By the turn of the century, the competence, and even the morality, of local board members came to be widely questioned. Many were illiterate, some were corrupt, and most used their influence for personal and partisan gain (Lyke, 1970). At the same time, the competency of teachers was also called into question.

In reaction to this corruption, early reformers worked with state governments to create nonpartisan central district boards. They also supported the hiring of professional managers for both school systems and individual schools to mitigate, as much as possible, the influence of politics in public education. Boards for individual schools were gradually abolished, and uniform standards in personnel, curriculum, and finance were adopted by central district boards and state legislatures. While these early reformers realized that it would be impossible to completely eliminate politics from the schools, their purpose was to minimize it, to adopt nonpartisan standards, and to curtail the dominance of local group interests (Ornstein, 1974).

With the rise of professional management in education, central school boards underwent a dramatic reduction in membership and a concurrent shift in composition. Efficiency-minded businessmen, who ran the schools along business lines, eventually replaced the average citizens who, heretofore, had the dominant voice in the governance of local schools (Callahan, 1962).

The early twentieth century also brought with it several important social and economic changes in American life. The period was marked by a mass influx of non-English speaking immigrants and a rapid advancement in scientific knowledge and industrial development. More towns and schools were established to accommodate the expanding population, and the importance of education grew as it became apparent that a more educated work force was needed in the market-oriented economy that industrialization had brought. The number of boards of education also grew, and, increasingly, these boards administered multiple schools.

Parents and Citizens

Since the time of the dismantling of individual school boards, the formal roles that parents and citizens have played have become increasingly institutionalized and organized around support of the professional educational establishment. Their roles have been relegated chiefly to school and instructional support activities, though, in some instances, they have been involved in an advisory capacity (Marburger, 1985). Today, dependent on state and district laws and regulations, the individual parent and citizen retains his or her voice in public education largely through direct or indirect participation on district and state boards of education.

Recognizing the potential value of parent involvement in the management of public education, the Federal government has recently experimented with mandating parent participation in programs that receive Federal funding, but this initiative has not been wholly successful. This may relate to the structure of the programs themselves. Formal authority over implementation has been given to professional educators, who have often worked to maintain their own authority over schooling, rather than to empower parents — especially poor and minority parents (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; LeCompte and Bennett, 1988).

Increasingly, parents have recognized the need to organize in order to gain a more substantial voice in the governance of their schools. Statewide educational lobbying efforts by parent organizations, such as the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), have become more insistent in placing pressure on state legislatures in support of particular educational programs. In rare instances, such organizations have sought to regain a formal voice in the control of their public schools. For example, parents and citizens of Chicago organized in 1988 in support of the Chicago School Reform Act. This legislation fundamentally restructured the Chicago Public Schools to give majority control of school policymaking councils to parents and community residents (Moore, 1990).

Principals

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, principals exercised considerable power within their schools. For the most part, they were not held accountable to any authority, at the district, state, or Federal levels. Operating autonomously, they made most of the critical decisions affecting the operation and day-to-day management of their schools, including decisions regarding the safety and protection of students and teachers, the maintenance of the school building, and the instruction of students. However, later in this century, as school system operations became more centralized, principals' authority was assumed by district- and state-level administrators and their control over budget, staffing, and curriculum decisions was slowly eroded (Marburger, 1985; Odden and Marsh, 1990).

Despite this erosion of authority, Marburger (1985) argues that today's principal retains considerable influence in the local school community by determining the educational "climate" of the school, its openness to the community, and the quality of teaching that takes place there. A recent government report (U.S. Department of Education, 1992a) supports this conclusion, indicating that, while principals and other school administrators perceive that they have less influence than both district staff and teachers in establishing curriculum (only 11 percent say they are most influential in curriculum matters), they claim influence commensurate with that of central office staff over establishing discipline policy and more influence than either teachers or district staff regarding the hiring of new full-time teachers. This study further reports that, in smaller and more rural school districts, school administrators perceive themselves as less restricted by a central bureaucracy than their counterparts in urban districts, and, consequently, more able to exert their influence at the local level.

Teachers

Individual teachers, insomuch as they are the primary providers of instruction, determine most directly the quality of the education received by students. At the beginning of the twentieth century, teachers were typically young, transient, and, for the most part, only slightly better educated than their students (Watts and McClure, 1990). Thus, until recently, there has been an historical trend to "teacher proof" instruction by regulating and standardizing its delivery. The administrative solution to the lack of stable, professional teachers was to create a system of bureaucratic control with decision-making authority vested above the level of the classroom (Watts and McClure, 1990). Teachers' guides, curricula, and other "directive" controls were developed, and the training of teachers was systematically standardized (Wesley, 1957). Increasingly, teachers were evaluated on the basis of their ability to maintain disciplinary control over their students and the extent to which they "followed orders":

> Such supervision emphasized uniformity and demanded strict adherence to detailed courses of study that had been designed to inculcate certain knowledge and common skills. There were two fundamental criteria: Could the teacher control the class? Were the administrative edicts being strictly followed? (Atkinson and Maleska, 1965)

Another recent U.S. Department of Education report (1992b) sheds some light on those areas in which teachers presently perceive that they maintain authority. Relatively few teachers believe that they exert a great deal of influence over policy decisions in such areas as discipline (35 percent), in-service programs (31 percent), grouping of students by ability (28 percent), and curriculum (35 percent). However, the majority believe that they have considerable influence over decisions at the classroom level, including selecting textbooks and instructional materials (54 percent), selecting the content, topics, and skills to be taught (59 percent), disciplining individual students (69 percent), selecting teaching techniques (85 percent), and determining the amount of homework to be assigned (87 percent). As in the case of school administrators, teachers' perception of control is inversely related to community size.

Control and Influence over Education at the District Level

The trend toward centralization in public education is further evidenced at the district level. Local boards of education initially administered individual schools, later, expanding their administrative control to several schools. These local boards ultimately merged with one another to centralize control even further. The National Center for Education Statistics (1993) reports that the number of public school districts has decreased steadily from approximately 117,000 in 1940 to some 15,000 today. Presently, school districts in the United States vary in size from single-school districts to vast conglomerates consisting of hundreds of elementary and secondary schools.

Increasingly, district-level actors have become interpreters and administrators of educational policies that are dictated at the state and Federal levels. Superintendents and central office staff are bound and guided by state regulation, and district school boards exercise only those powers that are granted explicitly by the state.

Boards of Education

With the movement from school-level boards of education to centralized district-level boards at the turn of the twentieth century, the membership of school boards became disproportionately representative of social and political elites within communities (Spring, 1985). Early twentieth century educators believed it especially important to have successful and well-educated men as board members, inasmuch as they were perceived to be more knowledgeable and more interested in education than the population at large. Indeed, the trend toward centralization and reduction in size of urban school boards was premised largely on the idea of limiting lay participation in school affairs to such "community leaders." Opposition to this trend came from organized labor, which feared that board membership drawn from only one sector of the community would result in the domination of school policy by elitist political and economic views (Cronin, 1973).

Today, membership on district boards of education is by election or appointment. According to the National School Boards Association, approximately 96 percent of local board members are elected, and the remaining 4 percent are appointed. Appointed boards are most common in the mid-Atlantic region (e.g., a majority of the boards in Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina are appointed), while states with historical ties to the New England "town meeting" tradition, including those in the Western Reserve (e.g., Ohio, Indiana, Illinois) and those settled during the western expansion (e.g., Missouri, Wisconsin, Texas) generally elect school boards (NSBA, 1989). Unique among the fifty states, Louisiana draws on a tradition of appointments based on French, or "parish," law.

The type of election employed by a district is a key factor in determining the composition of its school board. During the nineteenth century, voting within delimited geographical areas, or "zones," produced a pluralist pattern of representation. But, as the country moved to a system of greater centralization, at-large and nonpartisan elections resulted in greater "trustee representation" — i.e., representation by the social and political elite, who had significant electoral advantages over their competitors (Spring, 1985). Recently, however, a Federal appeals court has ruled that at-large school board elections may be struck down as discriminatory, even in districts where minorities win several seats (Onley, 1992).

Although boards of education were initially conceived to serve as mechanisms for local community control of public schools, the amount of control and influence that they wield has been significantly lessened in the twentieth century. In a sense, their role has become that of an ombudsman, relegated to dealing with complaints or protests from the community and often serving to support the educational establishment. Davis (1976) cites three factors responsible for the demise of district school boards' authority: (1) increased state and Federal government involvement in education policy; (2) increased regulation from court decisions; and (3) the unionization of teachers. As an illustration, he cites the case of the Orange County (Florida) School Board, which administers the thirty-second largest district in the United States. There, the majority of time-consuming education-related issues addressed each year were found to have been initiated *outside* the local district.

The Superintendent and Central Office Staff

Koerner (1968) argues that professional educators — i.e., superintendents and their central office staffs — control American education, despite the fact that superintendents report to their respective district school boards. In this regard, Hansen (1975) saw the evolving role of the superintendent as one of "politician" first and "educator" second — the successful superintendent would communicate well, manage public opinion, manipulate the informal power structure, and attempt to create an atmosphere of openness and trust. While evidence affirming Han-

sen's prediction is lacking, it is based on the emergence of increasingly complex pluralist power structures at the local level, which, through pressures exerted by organized minority and community groups lobbying for special programs, have supplanted the monopolistic power structures that previously dominated.

Central office staff are charged with assisting the superintendent in the management of the school district, yet they can exercise a great deal of influence independently. McGivney and Haught (1972) argue that one of the inherent goals of the central office staff is to maintain control over the educational system. House (1974) suggests that central office staff accomplish this by controlling and limiting the information they provide to the district school board and other members of the educational system, thus serving a gatekeeping function that can determine which new programs are targeted for implementation.

While it is difficult to determine where the balance of power lies — with the superintendent or the central office staff — some research indicates that the superintendent is the key district-level actor in establishing educational policy. Zeigler and Jennings (1974) found that, in 70 percent of the school districts in the United States, the superintendent has primary responsibility for setting the agenda at district school board meetings and, therefore, has the potential to control board decisions by limiting public debate.

Teachers' Unions

Today, there are some 2.4 million public school teachers at the elementary and secondary school levels in the United States (NCES, 1992). Approximately 80 percent belong to either the National Education Association (NEA) or the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) (Asaucedo, 1993). Concentrated primarily in large cities, the AFT represents about 25 percent of unionized teachers, while the NEA represents most of the remaining 75 percent (Marburger, 1985).

The National Education Association. The NEA was formed in 1857 as a national policy-making organization and, until the 1960s, was dominated by school district superintendents, college professors, and administrators. Initially, it served a standardizing function, providing a vehicle for the sharing of information among school leaders across the country. Early work of the NEA included the shaping of the modern high school through the formation of the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies, the standardization of teacher training, and the dissemination of curricular changes in elementary and secondary schools. Later — in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s — the NEA created, housed, and staffed various organizations central to American public education, including the American Association of School Administrators, organizations in curriculum disciplines, etc. In the late 1950s, as the AFT began to emerge as a chief competitor, the NEA broadened its focus to deal more with issues of teacher welfare (Spring, 1985).

The American Federation of Teachers. From its beginnings, in 1897, the AFT placed teacher-welfare issues and improving public education within the broader context of the labor movement in the United States. Increased participation of teachers in the decision-making process of local school districts was among the union's early goals, as evidenced by this excerpt from a speech delivered in 1912 by Margaret Haley, a founder of the AFT:

> Teachers should have a voice and a vote in the determination of educational policies...We advocate the adoption of a plan that will permit all teachers to have a share in the administration of the affairs of their own schools (Eaton, 1975).

In the 1920s, the AFT attempted to establish its own schools to serve as an alternative to public education. This move came in reaction to a growing perception that conservative economic and political philosophies had taken hold of American public education and that school boards had become increasingly dominated by business and professional elites. An experimental school, The Manumit School for Workers' Children, was operated as a kind of industrial democracy, with students exercising control through democratically run meetings. However, this pioneering school was closed in the latter part of the decade when charges of Communist leanings were raised (Eaton, 1975).

With the AFT's failure to establish more democratic and participative schools, it was not until 1944 that teachers were again able to assert significant organizational influence over public education. In that year, the AFT local in Cicero, Illinois signed the first collective bargaining agreement with a district board of education. The agreement was in the form of a regular labor union contract that recognized the AFT local as the sole bargaining agent of the district's teachers and listed pay schedules and grievance procedures. Until this point, many local education associations had been controlled by local administrators, who used the local organizations to convey policies

determined by district- and school-level administrators. Collective bargaining reversed this relationship, turning local affiliates into organizations that informed boards and administrators of teachers' concerns (Shedd, 1988).

In 1947, the AFT local in Buffalo, New York declared the first organized teacher strike and sparked a movement of teacher militancy that lasted through the 1960s. The strike, once and for all, forced district- and school-level administrators to share authority with teachers. The success of these tactics as employed by the AFT contributed to the more than quadrupling of its membership and, ultimately, forced the NEA to adopt the collective bargaining approach (Spring, 1985).

State Authority Over Education

Under the Constitution of the United States, all responsibilities not explicitly allocated to the Federal government are reserved for the states. Because education is not one of those responsibilities so allocated, state governments retain the greatest legal authority over the delivery of educational services — more than any other governmental body at any level. Historically, as the importance of and interest in education have grown, state governments have become increasingly involved in the administration and delivery of instruction at the local level.

In the early-nineteenth century, state governments exercised little direct control over education, leaving local communities to determine how best to educate their children. State departments of education remained relatively small, confining their activities to the collection of education statistics and the promotion of good schools and teacher training programs. However, with the rise of industrialization in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the states began to expand their role, passing compulsory education laws, setting teacher certification requirements, and prescribing specific curricular content for elementary and secondary education. Through the mid- to late-twentieth century, state education bureaucracies grew to keep pace with their expanding role.

Within the last decade, especially, there has been a surge of state involvement in education policy development (Kirst, 1987). Many observers link this new activist stance to the retreat of Federal policymakers, arguing that state governments moved to fill the resulting vacuum (Clark and Astuto, 1986), while others interpret it as a reaction to the perceived abdication of responsibility for public education at the local level, citing the many failures of large, urban school districts, including high dropout rates and low test scores. Still other observers suggest that increased state involvement in education policy development is the result of the expanding role of state governments in education finance. State governments currently provide between 8 and 91 percent of total school expenditures at the local level, and approximately half of all school expenditures nationally (Gold et al., 1992; Medrich et al., 1991).

Today, there are fifty-seven[1] state education agencies providing a wide range of services. Most set minimum standards for curriculum, pupil promotion, graduation, and for specific education programs such as kindergarten, vocational education, and special education. In addition, most establish detailed regulations regarding the physical features of school buildings (e.g., the size of school libraries). Many state education agencies also define the length of the school day and year and establish requirements for the certification of teachers. Finally, some have developed detailed curricula for core subjects and mandate the adoption of specific textbooks for use statewide.

The Organization of State Systems of Education

The broad authority that states have over education is typically exercised through a governmental system that includes the governor's office, the state legislature, a state superintendent of education, a state department of education, and a state board of education. Of course, actual institutional arrangements vary from state to state.

The means of selecting the state superintendent of education and the state board of education vary, though membership on a state board is generally determined by one of three methods: (1) election by the people or their representatives; (2) appointment by the governor; or (3) automatic appointment to the board as a consequence of holding another state office — *ex officio*. A recent poll of state departments of education indicated that state boards were "elected by the people or representatives of the peo-

1 In addition to the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, American Somoa, and the U.S. Department of Defense operate education agencies.

ple" in 13 states, appointed by the governor in 33 states, and served *ex officio* in two states (Spring, 1985). The state superintendent is elected in some cases (26 percent of states), and, in others, he or she is appointed by the governor (23 percent) or the state board of education (51 percent).

The Structure of Power in State Systems of Education

Traditionally, elections to state boards of education have received little attention, and, until recently, few expected state boards to be very influential in the formulation or implementation of educational policy (Sroufe, 1969). As a consequence of this power vacuum, state superintendents of education and education department staffs have enjoyed substantial influence over educational issues. Today, however, state boards are becoming increasingly influential in the development of educational policy. For example, in a majority of the 27 states with outcome-based educational programs, state boards of education were instrumental in initiating the reform (Stamp, 1993).

Garnering political support from parent and citizens groups discontent with the public schools, governors also have increased their involvement in the educational arena over the past two decades. At the same time, expanding legislative staffs have allowed legislators to work more independently of state departments of education, furthering their own legislative agendas. Fuhrman (1982) asserts that the growing expertise of legislators and governors, combined with the fragmentation of educational interests, has set the stage for the eclipse of the professional educator and administrator by state-level government, particularly the legislature, in the arena of educational policy.

The Federal Government and the Courts

As stated previously, the United States Constitution reserves for the states all responsibilities not explicitly allocated to the Federal government. Although education is not among those responsibilities, it would be inaccurate to say that the Federal government has no influence on educational policy. It does play a guiding role in the setting of national educational priorities as well as a role as protector of individual civil rights and guarantor of equity in education.

Methods of Federal Government Control

Spring (1985) identifies three primary methods of Federal government control over public education: (1) the offer of financial aid to school systems that adopt certain programs, policies, materials, or curricula; (2) the threat to withhold Federal funds to school systems found in violation of civil-rights guidelines; and (3) the support of research and development in education.

The 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provides an illustration of Federal government control through the application of financial incentives. The ESEA was a principal component of the Federal government's attack on poverty through legislated improvements focused on the education of disadvantaged children. The government exerted its influence by providing categorical aid — money designated for use in particular programs — to school systems judged to be in compliance with Federal guidelines. Increasingly, categorical aid was legislated to support local and state educational systems in specific priority areas. In addition to the ESEA, legislation that authorized categorical aid included: the Education of Handicapped Children Act, the Bilingual Education Programs Act, the Emergency School Aid Act, the Ethnic Heritage Act, and the Indian Education Act.

The Federal government's enforcement of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act is typical of the second type of government control. Requiring mandatory withholding of Federal funds from institutions practicing racial, religious, or ethnic discrimination, the Act established a clear precedent for the U.S. government to determine the conditions under which these and similar funds would be disbursed. Title VI thus reversed the relationship that had existed heretofore between the Federal government and local and state school systems. The Office of Education — now the Department of Education — emerged as an interpreter and enforcer of legislation, whereas previously it had served primarily as a vehicle to disburse Federal funds to local and state school systems with only minimal regulation. Later extensions of this precedent include the passage of Title IX to end sex discrimination and the passage of the Buckley Amendment to guarantee students the right to examine their own school records.

The Federal government's involvement in curriculum development illustrates the last type of central government control identified by Spring. With the passage of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958, the Federal government first began to provide financial support to groups to develop

new curricula, as well as to Federal institutes to train teachers and distribute new materials. With the aid of Federal funds, curricula were developed in the fields of physics, mathematics, biology, chemistry, and social studies. By the early 1970s, Federal authorities had established the ability to influence curriculum development in a wide range of areas through the allocation of such research and development funds. More recently, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) has funded professional subject matter associations in support of the development of curriculum standards and frameworks to serve as models for the states.

Role of the Courts in Education

In the American system of government, the courts — both state and Federal — are regularly called upon to interpret the constitutionality of existing laws. As final arbiter, the Supreme Court of the United States therefore exerts considerable power and influence over American education. Its most influential decisions have centered on its interpretation of the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. For example, in the landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954), the court declared provisions in state constitutions that segregated African-American and white students in the public schools unconstitutional. Other decisions have defined the role of religion in the schools (*Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 1925; *State of Wisconsin, Petitioner v. Jonas Yoder et al.*, 1972), guaranteed academic freedom to teachers and students (*Pickering v. Board of Education of Township High School*, 1967; *Goss v. Lopez*, 1975), determined the propriety of corporal punishment in schools (*Ingrham v. Wright*, 1977), and ensured that children from non-English-speaking backgrounds are afforded special help in learning English (*Lau et al v. Nichols et al.*, 1974).

Administrative Decentralization: The Countermovement of Centralization

Despite the expanded role of the Federal and state governments in education in the 1950s and 1960s — in civil rights, school access, pre-school education, and programs for disabled and at-risk children — by the late 1960s, many observers expressed heightened concern about the quality of American public education. Beleaguered local educational establishments demanded that bureaucratic red tape be cut and that professional educators be allowed more control over the schools, using all of the practical experience that they had acquired in the classroom.

School systems across the nation initiated decentralization reforms, and, by 1975, most larger districts reported some type of administrative decentralization (Ornstein, 1975). School boards and superintendents created intermediate subdistrict-level structures to deal more responsively with schools. Nonetheless, the scope of these decentralization reforms, as compared with more recent efforts, was limited — the number of students per decentralized unit typically ranged between 15,000 and 25,000 students (Ornstein, 1975).

In recent years, both Federal and state governments have sought to establish standards and to ensure accountability in public education by emphasizing outcomes, rather than process. The Federal government's articulation of specific education goals and the efforts of many states to establish curriculum frameworks and content standards exemplifies this trend toward increased flexibility in policy development. Nonetheless, the historically evolved tension between centralization and decentralization in education remains. Ferris (1992) calls this the paradox of educational reforms. While the popularity of decentralized (i.e., school-based) management grows, concurrent reforms at the district, state, and Federal levels often constrain its full implementation and further the trend toward centralization.

CHAPTER II
SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT

The administrative decentralization movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s has been largely eclipsed by the school-based management reforms of the 1980s and 1990s. Today, school-based management is widespread, existing in school systems across the United States (Malen, Ogawa, and Kranz, 1990; David, 1989; Clune and White, 1988). The National Education Association reports that fully 30 percent of the 5,747 local affiliates responding to a recent survey currently operate under some form of site-based management, and another 15 percent have plans to implement it in the immediate future (NEA, 1991). Another survey, conducted recently by the Council of Great City Schools (1992), reports that 85 percent of member districts — including many of the largest districts in the nation — have implemented some form of school-based management.

This chapter examines what we currently know about school-based management, drawing upon recent theoretical and conceptual developments, as well as a growing number of case studies and comparative analyses. Beginning with the rationale underlying decentralized decision making, a clear conceptual definition of school-based management is identified. The magnitude and scope of authority devolved to schools, the balance of power among school-site stakeholders, and the factors that shape the implementation of reform are then reviewed. We conclude with a characterization of the constraints placed on restructuring from all levels of governance and a discussion of how school-based management can serve as a mechanism for change.

Rationale and Definition

Conceptually, school-based management rests on two fundamental tenets: (1) those most closely affected by decisions ought to play a significant role in making those decisions; and (2) educational reforms will be most effective and long-lasting when carried out by people who feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for the process of education (Lewis, 1989). While decentralized management is not the appropriate management strategy for all organizations, it is, according to reform advocates, particularly well suited to schools (Lawler, Mohrmon, and Mohrmon, 1993). They argue that management strategy depends on the nature of work, which can be characterized in three dimensions: (1) its complexity; (2) whether it is best done individually or in groups; and (3) the degree of uncertainty associated with the work. While simple, individual, and highly certain work lends itself to hierarchical organization, complex, collegial, and uncertain work — which, they argue, characterizes education — lends itself more to decentralized, high-involvement strategies.

Despite the apparent strength of these arguments, some critics assert that shifting the locus of formal decision-making arrangements does not guarantee the alteration of influence relationships and, therefore, granting schools greater autonomy does not necessarily increase the likelihood that they will become more effective (Malen, Ogawa, and Kranz, 1990). Louis (1990) lodges an analogous criticism against reforms in the business community, concluding that the model upon which school-based management is based is theoretically flawed inasmuch as it fails to establish the connection between the decentralization of authority and increased output. A more moderate view is advanced by Purkey (1990), who suggests that it is premature to dismiss the rationale underlying school-based management, given the lack of empirical data regarding its practice.

School-based management varies considerably from district to district, and even among schools within districts. Thus, it has been characterized, alternatively, as "a process" (Marburger, 1985), "a generic term for diverse activities" (Malen, Ogawa, and Kranz, 1990), and "chameleon-like, being everywhere and nowhere at once" (David, 1989). Much of this confusion can be traced to a lack of conceptual clarity that pervades the literature.

In particular, the distinction between "school-based management" and "shared decision making" is obscured when researchers use the terms interchangeably. Hill and Bonan (1991) make a useful contribution in this regard. They define "school-based management" as a shift in decision-making authority from district to school, reserving the term "shared decision making" to describe the redistribution of authority among school-site actors. This approach allows for the fact that, while, in some restructured schools, principals retain most of the real decision-making authority, in others, teachers share this authority to some degree, and, in still others, parents play a significant role.

In the two sections that follow, we are guided by this conceptual approach. First, we examine the magnitude and scope of decision-making authority devolved to schools under school-based management, including the role of knowledge and information in the successful implementation of reform. Then, we shift our focus to a discussion of the redistribution of decision-making authority among key stakeholders within schools, presented in terms of three ideal-typical models of reform.

Devolution of Authority

Considerable agreement exists among researchers that budget, staffing, and curriculum represent the principal areas in which decision-making authority is decentralized under school-based management (David, 1989; Clune and White, 1988; Garms, Guthrie, and Pierce, 1978). Additionally, most researchers agree that, to enhance the likelihood of successful implementation, school-level actors should be trained in school-governance skills and be provided the necessary school-level information to make well-informed decisions (Wohlstetter and Mohrman, 1992; Lawler, 1986).

While some argue that the success of school-based management is contingent upon the degree of authority devolved to schools (Mohrman, Lawler and Mohrman, 1991; Neal, 1990), others suggest that a clear and continuous message to school-level actors in support of change may be more important (ERS, 1991; David, 1989; Williams, 1978). Some districts leave centralized those decisions that might either burden school-level actors (e.g., collective bargaining agreements) or be less cost effective if made at the school level (e.g., the supply of food services). Operational areas typically reserved at the central level include insurance, legal fees, major repairs, custodial services, taxation, transportation, and food services (ERS, 1991; English, 1989). The extent to which authority over these areas can, or should, be delegated to individual schools remains a topic of legitimate debate.

Finally, the amount of decision-making authority devolved to schools in one domain is often linked to that in another. For example, because salaries, pensions, and medical benefits comprise the bulk of any school district's budget (Hess, 1991), the extent to which authority is devolved to schools in either budgeting or staffing is directly related to the degree that it is devolved in the other. Correspondingly, limitations imposed on decisions in one domain — e.g., collective bargaining agreements — place parallel constraints on the other (David, 1989).

Budget

Schools operating under school-based management typically receive either a lump-sum budget based on a specific, per student distribution or some portion of the total budget allocated according to their calculated need for equipment, materials, supplies, and services. Additional money often is passed directly on to schools in those districts that receive funds from Federal and state programs (David, 1989; Neal, 1990; Clune and White, 1988).

Usually, school-level actors, meeting as a school council, formulate a budget for the funds allocated to them by the district, making decisions according to priorities which they, the council, have set. With budgetary authority under school-based management, those savings realized from one aspect of managing the school may be applied toward other areas. Able to reap the benefits of their own frugality, school-level actors have a vested interest and increased incentive to allocate resources both efficiently and in ways beneficial to their school. Some schools are given the authority to shift funds across personnel categories as well as between personnel and other categories. This allows them additional freedom to balance the need for full- and part-time staff against material and equipment needs. For example, with the savings realized from not replacing an aide or guidance counselor, schools might purchase new computers, equipment for the school gymnasium, or encyclopedias for the school library (David, 1989; Clune and White, 1988; ERS, 1991).

Staffing

Schools operating under school-based management are given varying levels of authority over staffing decisions, including the definition of staffing needs (i.e., positions they would like to fill, including principals, teachers, and support staff) and the selection of staff to fill those positions. State and district regulations governing class size, tenure, and hiring practices, in combination with collective bargaining agreements, determine the limits of such decision-making authority. However, within these limitations, school-level actors are able to select the mix, qualifications, and personalities of the staff that best suit the needs of their school (Clune and White, 1988; ERS, 1991; Wohlstetter and Buffett, 1992).

Program and Curriculum

Under school-based management, school-level actors may modify or supplement existing curricula and instructional materials, or, in some cases, develop new curricula according to the established

needs and priorities of their school. Typically, they may determine the nature of alternative programs to be offered in the school, including the manner in which instruction is delivered. Delegating some measure of control over curriculum to schools may stimulate the creation of new programs and materials, which in turn, have been shown to stimulate communication and cooperation among staff (e.g., David, 1989; Clune and White, 1988; ERS, 1991).

Training and Information

Specialized Training. Given the changing roles required of participants charged with the implementation of school-based management, all parties can profit from training in team skills, decision making, management, and programmatic areas (Lawler, 1986; Wohlstetter and Mohrman, 1992). The rationale for such training includes:

- The need to broaden participants' perspectives on schooling, so that they may contribute more knowledgeably to school improvement;
- The need to deepen participants' understanding of the organizational and systemic dimensions of school management, so that they may develop cogent strategies for school improvement; and
- The need to improve their problem-solving, decision making, and team building skills for participation in management activities.

Odden (1993) suggests that to adequately train staff in these areas would require ongoing investments approaching two to four percent of revenues, or an average of $100 - 200 per pupil. This is comparable to the investment in human resources development of most productive private-sector firms.

Information. While training addresses the process and context of decision making, information on revenues and expenditures, student performance, socio-demographics, and parent/community satisfaction is equally important for the successful implementation of school-based management. Information that supports good decision making can be provided by district- and school-level staff or other stakeholders, including community members, parents, and students (Lawler, 1986). Comprehensive outcome data are especially critical to good decision making, despite political or technical difficulties in collecting them (Marsh and Strauss, 1992). The type of outcome data required is best determined by the kinds of decision-making authority devolved to school-site actors. If, for example, school-based management is conceived as part of a systemic reform effort, including a market-based choice plan, then participants at the school site must have information about their school's performance relative to the schools with which it competes. Alternatively, if restructuring is designed to make the school more responsive to the parents and citizens of the community, then school-based decision makers require information about the extent to which the school meets their needs (Johnson and Boles, 1992). This information may include measures of student achievement, dropout rates, attendance rates, or even measures of parent satisfaction.

The Balance of Power at the School-Level

Most districts implementing school-based management enact a number of regulations to ensure that schools act responsibly in fulfilling the district's over-arching mission and goals. Typically, districts specify that decision-making authority be shared by a school-site council that includes the principal and other constituencies, usually teachers and parents. In addition, some districts specify the inclusion of other stakeholders, such as community members, support staff, union representatives, or students. District authorities may also prescribe decision-making rules, veto powers, and the relative weight given to the voice of each constituency. Finally, in some districts, governance councils are advisory bodies, while in others, their decisions are legally binding.

With this variety, it is not surprising that schools operating under school-based management vary substantially in terms of the relative influence that local constituencies bring to bear on the decision-making process (Wohlstetter and Buffett, 1991; Wohlstetter and McCurdy, 1991). In the present study, three ideal-typical models are posited as a means of characterizing this relative "balance of power"[2] at the school level:

- The principal-control model;

2 By "balance of power" we mean the relative magnitude of influence over decision making exercised by school-site stakeholders.

- The teacher-control model; and
- The community-control model.

Although, collectively, these models convey the structure of power relations among school-site actors in absolute terms, they are not intended as real-world representations. At each school site, the actual balance of power is best represented in terms of a three-dimensional power matrix, in which the axes are defined according to the *relative* influence of principals, teachers, and parents. While the models posited here do not exist in pure form, they do, nonetheless, provide a useful basis for discussion and research. Each is examined, in turn, below.

The Principal-Control Model

The principal-control model shifts power and accountability from district-level authorities to the individual school principal, who is held accountable for the overall operation of the school. Districts employing variations of this model typically require principals to set aside their traditional role as administrator of district policies, rules, and regulations and to take on a new role as leader and manager of their respective schools. In Prince William County, Virginia, for example, while the central office specifies that administrators, teachers, parents, and students must be involved in each school's decision-making process through a school council, the principal is given ultimate authority to determine staffing patterns, hire employees, purchase supplies, structure the organization of the school, and implement educational innovations (Hill & Bonan, 1991).

The Teacher-Control Model

The teacher-control model shifts power and accountability from district-level authorities to the individual school site, where teachers are given the primary responsibility and authority to govern their school. Recent reforms in Rochester, New York, represent a variation of this model. Since restructuring, all Rochester schools have been governed by councils composed of principals, administrators, teachers, parents, and, at the secondary level, students. However, because district rules require that teachers have majority representation, some have suggested that they are favored in the balance of power (Koppich, 1992). Those who advocate school-based management as a means of empowering teachers are likely to regard reforms based on the teacher control model as most desirable.

The Community-Control Model

The community-control model shifts power and accountability from district-level authorities to school councils on which parents and community representatives play a dominant role. Under this model, lay persons representing broad community interests rather than professional educators, have ultimate authority and accountability for school management. Schools in Chicago, Illinois, currently operate under a variation of this model. There, parent-dominated Local School Councils (LSCs) have substantial authority over both hiring and budgetary matters (Moore, 1991).

Factors Shaping School-Based Management

Purkey (1990) argues that each district seems to adapt school-based management to its own needs, shaping it to fit the district's cultural, historical, and environmental conditions, and that, within each school, the structure of shared decision making reflects unique climatic and cultural differences. Contextual factors shaping the form that school-based management assumes in particular districts and schools across the country include, among others, who initiates reform, the role of teachers' associations in its implementation, and district size.

Initiator of Reform

The initiator of reform may be at the school, district, or state level. Whether the district superintendent, the local school board, or the state legislature, the initiator greatly influences the definition of desirable outcomes, the devolution and distribution of power, and the boundaries of reform (Wohlstetter and McCurdy, 1990). Outcomes other than those envisioned by the initiator can be discouraged by formal mechanisms (e.g., by prescribing many rules to govern the relative balance of power at the school level) and informally (e.g., by creating a culture that does not support "undesirable" change). Thus, in Chicago, where reform was imposed externally by the state legislature, changes in school governance have been substantial. On the other hand, where reform is initiated from within a district, as in Dade County, Florida, governance changes are often less dramatic. Indeed, some would argue that such internally negotiated reforms are unlikely to lead to major improvements in the quality of education or in governance structure (Moore, 1990). Regardless of who initiates reform, most observers agree that "the extent of change is constrained by frames of reference that shape beliefs about what is possible, exist-

ing organizational routines, and political bargains" (Moore, 1990).

Teachers' Unions Involvement in the Implementation of Reform

While district boards and administrators are far more likely than local teachers' associations to initiate school-based management reform (NEA, 1991), the influence of such organizations on successful implementations should not be understated. Odden (1991) argues that few successful restructuring efforts reach advanced stages unless teacher commitment to the project is developed.[3] Teachers exert most of their influence in shaping school-based management projects through collective bargaining agreements reached by their unions with local school districts. In a substantial number of districts operating under school-based management, the reform is governed by a special provision in a collective bargaining agreement (NEA, 1991). McDonnell and Pascal (1988) found that these agreements could serve either as effective vehicles for implementing reform or as major obstacles to change.

The rate of implementation of school-based management varies substantially across districts, depending upon which of the nation's two largest teachers' unions serves as the collective bargaining agent. Data from a survey of forty-five of the largest districts in the nation, conducted by the Council for Great City Schools (1992), suggest that the AFT is more likely to involve itself in the implementation of reform than is the NEA. Of those districts reporting that they have implemented school-based management districtwide, seven out of ten have a collective bargaining agreement with the AFT, while, of those districts reporting that they do not practice school-based management, two out of three have a collective bargaining agreement with the NEA.

Nevertheless, when NEA affiliates *do* involve themselves in the implementation process, it seems to further their ends. In three out of four districts with NEA contracts specifically regulating school-based management, the union has either: (1) joint management, (2) representation on a district level board, or (3) "sign-off" authority on individual school projects (NEA, 1991). By comparison, in those districts where a collective bargaining agreement does not govern reform, only one in three affiliates report having similar influence.[4] Furthermore, the NEA reports that districtwide reform projects in which local affiliates are involved are "more likely to have the improvement of job satisfaction and the increase in education employees decision-making role as primary objectives" (NEA, 1991).[5]

District Size and the Implementation of Reform

Clune and White (1988) contend that the majority of school-based management reform projects have been implemented in small and medium-sized districts with student enrollments of less than 30,000. However, their study is based on a nonrepresentative "snowball" sample of only 100 districts across the country. More recent data suggest — albeit indirectly — that the relationship between district size and the implementation of school-based management reforms is actually in the opposite direction, with larger districts displaying a higher rate of implementation. As previously noted, the most recent NEA survey on the subject of school-based management found that roughly 30 percent of the 5,747 district-level respondents reported operating under some form of decentralized management (NEA, 1991). This number included districts of all sizes, including many of the smallest and largest districts in the country. In contrast, the Council of Great City Schools survey (cited previously), which focused exclusively on 45 of the nation's largest districts, found that 84 percent had implemented (or were currently implementing) school-based management reforms. The comparison between the two surveys suggests that reform initiatives aimed at decentralizing decision-making authority are more prevalent in the largest districts.

Differences in implementation rates between larger and smaller districts are likely related to staff perceptions of influence. Teachers and administrators

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3 Although "restructuring" is a term that has been used to refer to a broad range of reform initiatives, in this report, the term refers exclusively to school-based management reforms.

4 These data are derived from a recalculation of percentages presented in Table 7 (NEA, 1991, p. 13).

5 The response rate to the NEA survey was low — only 45 percent. This may result in an inflation, rather than an underestimation, of the true rate of implementation, since districts without school-based management might be less likely to respond to a survey dealing with reform issues about which they are unfamiliar.

in larger, more bureaucratic districts may perceive greater need for restructuring as an empowerment strategy. Data from the Department of Education's recent Schools and Staffing Survey lends support to this conclusion. Both teachers and administrators from smaller, rural districts reported considerably more influence on policy and practice than did their colleagues in larger, urban districts (U.S. Department of Education, 1992a; U.S. Department of Education, 1992b). Thus, school personnel in smaller communities may not perceive the same need for school-based management reforms as their peers in larger communities.

Other Factors

Some observers suggest that school reform is more likely to occur when there is the perception of an educational crisis and that the degree of perceived crisis will, in turn, influence the extent of reform. In the context of perceived crisis, more decision-making authority is likely to be devolved to school-site actors, as, for example, in the case of Chicago (Moore, 1991). Other factors, such as the arrival of a new superintendent or school board president, a change in the financial health of a district, or demographic changes in the student body may also affect the implementation of reform.

Constraints on School-Based Management

The implementation of school-based management may be constrained by a variety of factors. Formal and informal restrictions exist at the Federal, state, district, and school levels. Collective bargaining agreements and district, state, and Federal rules and regulations formally limit the innovations and potential impact of school-based management reforms.[6] Informally, norms of propriety and civility at the school level may constrain decision-making authority. School-based management does not magically lift all of the restrictions, regulations, laws, and norms that otherwise constrain school-level actors.

Researchers have found that, in many cases, actual control over budget and staffing has not been devolved to school-level actors in any substantial way (White, 1992; NEA, 1991; Clune and White, 1988; Malen and Ogawa, 1988; Wehlage, Smith, and Lipman, 1992; Johnson and Boles, 1992). Others have found that school-based management programs have not significantly impacted the technical issues of curriculum and instruction (Berman and Gjeltan, 1984; David, 1990; Malen and Ogawa, 1988; Marsh and Bowman, 1989). Rather, school governance bodies often limit their focus to issues such as school climate, campus beautification, career education, remedial education, parent involvement, scheduling, and safety. Not surprisingly, in light of these findings, some observes conclude that the rhetoric surrounding school-based management has often been greater than its substance (Wohlstetter and Buffett, 1992).

Others suggest that such limitations should not be unexpected. School-based management is not a panacea and there is not much reason to believe that it will transform ineffective schools into effective ones (Purkey, 1990). Nonetheless, restructuring may foster an atmosphere and culture that may indirectly result in the kinds of changes needed to create effective schools. Thus, it is essential to focus on the entire system of public education as a context for assessing school-based management as a tool for reform (Murphy et al., 1985).

Restrictions on School-Based Management at the Federal Level

Federal restrictions to the authority of school-based management programs are primarily related to the use of Federal monies and legal protections for equity. Restrictions on school-level budget autonomy include qualifications attached to categorical money — such as the more than six billion dollars in Chapter 1 funds distributed through state education agencies to local schools each year (NCES, 1992) — as well as noncategorical Federal block grant funds. Block grant recipients must comply with administrative, planning, and fiscal reporting requirements, as well as meet various non-discrimination and environmental standards (Hastings, 1982).

The courts, in their protection of individual civil rights, also limit the freedom of decision making school-level actors enjoy under school-based management. For example, building improvements, curriculum revisions, and staffing are constrained by court rulings that require schools to provide equal access to students who are challenged socially, economically, or physically. Other restraints may stem

6 See Hannaway (1993) for a discussion of how local political realities constrain the organizational structures of school districts and schools.

from court decisions that maintain the separation between "church and state," restrict prayer in school, or repudiate the implementation of religious curricula. Affirmative action plans for hiring, based on civil rights protection rulings, further restrict school-level decision-making authority (Prasch, 1984).

Restrictions on School-Based Management at the State Level

Although, since the turn of the twentieth century, state agencies have regulated various aspects of public education, with the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, in 1983, that role expanded precipitously. Goertz (1988) and Odden (1991) hold that state regulation of schools has been raised to a new level. Within three years of the publication of *A Nation at Risk:*

- Forty-two states increased high school graduation requirements;
- Forty-four states required student testing for minimum academic competencies; and
- Thirty-eight states required new teachers to pass a standardized test either before entering a teacher education program or before becoming certified to teach.

A recent report on state-developed curriculum materials and content standards further illustrates the regulatory role of state agencies (Pelavin Associates, 1992). Examining the materials provided by 42 states and the District of Columbia, researchers found that 77 percent set content standards[7] for statewide curricula, 53 percent distributed detailed curriculum guides,[8] and 46 percent set student performance standards.[9] Each of these state regulations effectively limits the authority of school governance councils operating under school-based management.

Restrictions on School-Based Management at the District Level

District level restrictions on school-based management begin as the district designs its plan of implementation. Limitations on scope of authority and responsibility established at the district level combine to restrict the flexibility of school-site actors. In addition, collective bargaining agreements, budget considerations, contracts, and staffing requirements further constrain the decision-making authority of school governance teams.

In forty-one states, collective bargaining agreements made at the district level broadly limit the authority of individual schools (Neal, 1990). In those cases where special contract provisions govern the implementation of reform, even greater restrictions may apply. Among restructuring projects regulated by formal agreements with the NEA, nearly one in three involve specific proscriptions on the scope of authority devolved to school-site actors (NEA, 1991).

Districts often establish additional restrictions on budget apportionment and vendor selection. In Detroit, for example, schools can contract with outside vendors, but do not receive full-dollar value when goods or services are purchased from nondistrict suppliers. In Chicago, purchases must be made from a preapproved list of vendors unless a waiver has been obtained from the district. Carrying over, at the school level, unspent funds to the following fiscal year is limited to substitute teacher funds in Los Angeles. Due to the poor financial condition of the district, other unspent funds revert to the district. In Chicago and Detroit, discretion over all salary resources is maintained at the district office level. In Chicago, this represents roughly 74 percent of the district's annual budget (Hess, 1991) and, in Detroit, salaries account for about 80 percent of budget.

Decision-making authority devolved to schools over staffing issues is typically limited as well. Prasch (1984) concluded that the selection and assignment of staff remains a highly centralized process because

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7 Content standards are descriptions of the knowledge, skills, and other understandings that schools should teach (based on the definition drawn from the final report of the National Council on Educational Standards and Testing.

8 Curriculum guides provide illustrative examples of the type of activities or books that teachers may use to help students achieve the goals outlined in the student performance standards.

9 Student performance standards define various levels of competence in subject matter set out in the content standards (based on the definition drawn from the final report of NCEST).

of collective bargaining agreements that protect seniority. Personnel hirings often must comply with district-level contractual guidelines as well as mandated student-teacher ratios. And, in Los Angeles, the district guarantees that no one will lose his or her job because of decentralization efforts.

Curriculum policy decisions also are frequently limited by district-level actions. Evidence of this is found in a recent U.S. Department of Education study (1992a), which reports that 33 percent of the surveyed school-level administrators feel that district-level actors are principally responsible for establishing curriculum.

Restrictions on School-Based Management at the School Level

Conley and Bacharach (1990) concluded that teachers seek greater influence over operational classroom decisions, including such areas as what to teach, how to teach, and what textbook to use, but not over strategic organizational decisions that deal with matters outside the realm of the classroom. Lewis (1989) reports data from a recent survey of "State Teachers of the Year" that lends support to this conclusion. She finds that, while the vast majority of these teachers (76 percent) believe that greater authority should be given to schools under school-based management, only 42 percent believe that greater authority should be given to teachers themselves.

While principals are likely to experience difficulty in sharing decision-making authority with teachers and parents, teachers may have difficulty in adapting to the new roles required of them under school-based management. Lewis (1989) reports that, even among those teachers recognized for their exemplary classroom performance, only one in three feels that restructuring should require greater accountability from them. Toch and Cooper (1990) conclude that:

Teachers, the very people who should be advocating reform, have posed one of the biggest obstacles. Far from embracing new ideas, teachers often feel threatened by them. Improvement still means change, and change — both real and imagined — challenges teachers' routines, values and, sometimes, their livelihoods.

Informal professional norms of propriety and civility may also serve to limit role changes associated with shared decision-making at the school level. Malen and Ogawa (1988) found that, in the schools of Salt Lake City, a norm of propriety among school-level actors operated regarding who should determine the agenda at school council meetings. Because critical decision-making areas were perceived to be under the purview of educational professionals, not parents, parental input was effectively limited to more peripheral issues. Furthermore, norms of civility prevented school-level actors from challenging one another, perpetuating the professional control established through norms of propriety.

Within-school restrictions of school-based management operations may also be related to the level of the school (i.e., elementary or secondary) and associated organizational differences (Rowan, Raudenbush, and Kang, 1991). Because secondary schools are structurally differentiated into various curricular tracks and academic departments, teachers located in various sectors of this academic division of labor may experience different working conditions and, therefore, develop different perceptions of the school environment (Anderson, 1982). Bacharach et al. (1986) report that, while secondary teachers primarily view their expertise in terms of subject matter, elementary school teachers primarily view their expertise in terms of clientele. It is likely that these perceptions of expertise affect attitudes about school-based management participation. Thus, researchers have found that restructuring efforts in secondary schools are often less comprehensive than those in elementary schools — typically creating new school components that complement, rather than transform, schools and focus on some sets of students rather than all students (Marsh and Bowman, 1987).

Having addressed some of the factors that impose limitations on school-based management at the district and school levels, we turn now to an examination of the potential of decentralized management as a mechanism for effecting change in public education.

School-Based Management: Mechanism for Change

Policymakers and researchers alike have bemoaned the lack of hard empirical data concerning the impact of school-based management on schools, teachers, or students (Louis, 1990; Purkey, 1990; ERS, 1991). Yet, like so many reforms that have preceded it, school-based management has been implemented in school districts across America, almost as an article of faith. Here, we examine the potential impact of restructuring, on various intermediate outcomes and on student performance measures.

Intermediate Outcomes

Reform advocates attribute a wide range of positive changes to the implementation of school-based management, but four intermediate outcomes are most often singled out: (1) increased efficiency in utilization of resources and personnel; (2) increased teacher professionalism; (3) implementation of curriculum reform; and (4) increased community engagement.

Increased Efficiency in Utilization of Resources and Personnel. Advocates of school-based management suggest that, by decentralizing decision-making authority over the areas of budget and staffing, a more efficient utilization of resources and personnel will result. Savings then can be applied in ways that serve the educational needs of students most effectively. How a district structures its incentives for increased efficiency varies from one restructuring project to another. The district office of Dade County, Florida, for example, has implemented three resource utilization incentives at the school level. These include:

- Encouraging schools to reduce teacher absenteeism by allowing unspent funds earmarked for substitute teachers to be spent in other ways;
- Allowing schools to make purchases from businesses not formally associated with the school district when they are the most economical suppliers; and
- Allowing schools to spend their savings from reduced utilities consumption as they choose. (Wohlstetter and Buffett, 1992; Hentschke, 1988).

Whatever incentives are invoked, however, the goals remain the same — more efficient utilization of limited resources and greater educational effectiveness.

Increased Teacher Professionalism. While it is possible to implement school-based management without redistributing decision-making authority at the school level (Purkey, 1990), restructuring is often equated with increased teacher professionalism (Conley and Bacharach, 1990). A growing body of evidence suggests that restructuring efforts that give teachers more control over their classrooms — and hence, encourage greater communication among school staff — contribute positively to the professional climate within schools. An expanded sense of communication and control is linked to increased levels of job satisfaction, job performance, and a sense of organizational and individual efficacy (Lee, Dedrick, and Smith, 1991; Bridges and Hallinan, 1978; Forsyth and Hoy, 1978; Little, 1982; Rutter, 1986; Farber and Ascher, 1991; Fuller et al., 1982). School-based management reforms that give principals more control, especially those who are inclined to share power (or where an existing faculty culture makes that an imperative) also seem to have positive impacts on teachers' perceptions of organizational efficacy (Purkey, 1990).

Implementation of Curriculum Reform. By devolving decision-making control over program and curriculum to the school level, advocates of decentralized management claim that schools will be better able to serve the unique needs of their students. For example, site-based managed schools in Poway, California and Winona, Minnesota have recommended new courses, redesigned report cards, made scheduling changes, selected in-service workshops, and participated in textbook selections with positive effects (White, 1992).

Knight (1985), in his review of case studies on the implementation of school-based curriculum development, found that teachers viewed curriculum reform as an important aspect of their professional development and perceived their efforts as successful. However, there was no evidence of associated gains in student performance.

Increased Parent and Community Engagement. By devolving decision-making authority to the school level, advocates of school-based management suggest that they can increase parent and community involvement. Gordon (1978) has identified three models of parent involvement:

- The Parent Impact Model, which addresses the influence of parents and home on the child's learning behavior;
- The School Impact Model, which refers to parent involvement in the school in such roles as volunteer or committee member; and
- The Community Impact Model, including influences on education from home, family, and community.

Some school-based management programs emulate the first model in their attempt to reach out to parents. For example, Dade County, Florida established a center that teaches parents how to help their children succeed in school (U.S. Department of Labor, 1990). Other reform programs pursue the second and third types of programs. Where school districts mandate the inclusion of parents and community members on school councils, parental integration

into the educational process may be increased. However, in a study of 135 schools in a large mid-western city, Wagenaar (1977) found no evidence that parent involvement in school decision making is directly related to increased student outcomes.

Student Outcomes

Advocates of reform contend that there exists a natural link between decentralized decision making and a host of positive student outcomes, including gains in achievement, lower dropout rates, increased attendance, and reduced disciplinary problems. However, there is virtually no empirical evidence to support these claims. In part, this is due to the fact that most school districts collect and report data on student achievement and other outcomes at the aggregate level, making it all but impossible to determine the effectiveness of school restructuring in these critical areas. Nevertheless, if decentralized decision making is effective in producing *intermediate* outcomes, such as those described above, and these, in turn, are linked to student performance gains, then there exists at least indirect support for school-based management's effectiveness as a mechanism for improving student outcomes.

CHAPTER III
STUDY DESIGN

Conceptual Framework

In the remaining chapters of this report, the implementation of school-based management reforms in six school districts across the United States is examined, focusing on the experiences of two schools within each district. Throughout, the analysis focuses on two distinct aspects of reform in each of the six districts: (1) the magnitude of reform and (2) the model of reform. While the former refers to the extent to which authority over key areas of decision making — budget, curricula, and hiring — is devolved to individual schools, the latter refers to the redistribution of that authority within schools. This conceptual distinction allows for the fact that, in some schools operating under school-based management, principals retain most of the real decision-making authority, in others, teachers share this authority to some degree, and, in still others, parents exert considerable influence.

Although the degree to which power is devolved to schools is undoubtedly influenced by many of the same factors that impact the distribution of authority within schools, these influences may manifest themselves quite differently. By way of illustration, consider the role of teachers' unions in the initiation and implementation of reform. As evidence will show, in districts where union influence is strong, collective bargaining agreements often limit the degree of authority that individual schools — and, consequently teachers — have over staffing decisions. Yet, in these same districts, teachers generally enjoy substantial influence over those decisions that *are* exercised at the school level. Thus, a single contextual factor — in this case, level of union strength — can influence the magnitude and model of reform in very different, or even opposite, ways.

Just as the magnitude and model of reform are influenced by a variety of factors, they, in turn, influence the agenda for reform and the specific actions that schools take to restructure themselves. If little real power is actually devolved to schools, or if Federal regulations, state curriculum guidelines, or union contract provisions constrain the decisions a school can make, then the agenda for reform is likely to be limited to trivial issues. Furthermore, whatever the extent of the power devolved to schools, if it is not distributed in a way that is deemed appropriate and equitable by all stakeholders, it is doubtful that meaningful reform will result.

To complete this framework, it is important that we go beyond process and examine outcomes. Unfortunately, the nature of student outcome data typically collected and reported by school districts and the concurrence of other reform efforts make it is virtually impossible to evaluate the success of school-based management in terms of its ultimate objectives.[10] Instead, we shall examine several intermediate outcomes in relation to various reform initiatives. These include: the efficiency with which schools operate, teacher professionalization, programmatic/curricular reform, and parent involvement. Thus, we will attempt to link the magnitude of reform (the degree to which real power is devolved) and various models of reform (how power is distributed) to such intermediate outcomes through an understanding of the specific actions taken in the name of reform.

This analysis framework is represented in Figure III-1. As presented here, the context of reform largely determines both the magnitude and model of reform which, in turn, drives the agenda of individual schools and the actions they take. Finally, these restructuring activities influence both intermediate and ultimate outcomes.

Data Collection

Site Selection Criteria

During the winter and spring of 1993, we visited two schools in each of six districts that have implemented school-based management reform. Table III-1 identifies the six district sites and describes them in terms of the criteria employed in their selection. First, we attempted to identify those districts in which significant power has been devolved to individual schools. Our focus, here, was on three important dimensions of power: budgetary control;

10 See NCES (1992) for a discussion of similar problems faced by researchers evaluating the linkages between state reform initiatives and student outcomes.

Figure III–1
School-Based Management: A Conceptual Framework

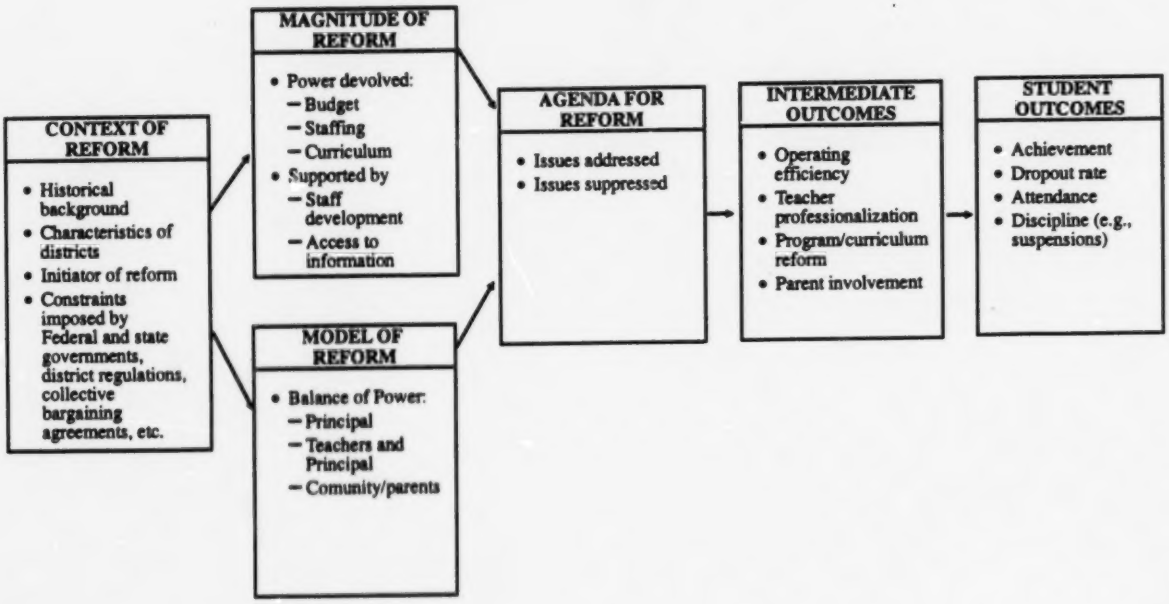


Table III-1
District Sites Visited

District	Number of Students	Balance of Power in School-Site Councils	Limited Budgetary Power	Limited Personnel Power	Curriculum Reform
San Diego, CA	123,000	Principal/Teachers	Yes	Yes	State/Local
Santa Fe, NM	12,500	Principal	Yes	Yes	State
Monroe County, FL	8,300	Principal	Yes	Yes	State
Chicago, IL	410,000	Principal/Parents	Yes	Yes	State
Rochester, NY	33,200	Principal/Teachers	Yes	Yes	State/Local
Prince William County, VA	43,000	Principal	Yes	Yes	None

personnel selection; and program/curriculum development. Although a survey of potential sites indicated that the implementation of school-based management often was constrained by a variety of external factors — including state-level curriculum reform, collective bargaining agreements, district-level policies, etc. — we attempted to select districts where substantial power in one or more of the above areas has been decentralized.

A second criterion that we used in the selection of sites pertains to the relative influence of key stakeholders — principals, teachers, and community/parents — at the school-site level. Following the broad outline of the conceptual framework discussed above, we tried to select districts that maximize variation in the distribution of formal decision-making authority at the school level. Among the sites that we selected, preliminary discussions with district administrators suggested that one district gives greater authority to principals and community/ parents, three give greater authority to principals, and two give significant authority to both principals and teachers.

We also attempted to achieve variation across sites in terms of region, urbanicity, and district size (i.e., student population served). Sites are located in the West, Mid-West, South, and East and vary in size from the third largest district in the nation to one that serves fewer than 10,000 students.

Both those schools that stand out as exemplars of the local reform effort and those that have experienced some difficulty in implementing reform were selected, based on the recommendations of district officials. Additionally, some attempt was made to achieve variation in the race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status of student populations served. The school sites selected for study include equal numbers of elementary schools, middle schools (one junior high), and high schools.

Site Visit Protocols

During our site visits, which involved approximately eight person days in each district, we conducted interviews with the following individuals and groups:

- District Superintendent;
- School Board President;
- Teachers' Union President;
- School Principals;
- Teacher representatives to school councils; and
- Parent representatives to school councils.

Site visit protocols were developed for each interviewee.[11] In addition, as part of each interview, we asked interviewees to complete a brief form entitled "School-Based Management Study: Perceived Influence." Finally, statistical data for each district, and for the two schools visited within each district, were collected using standardized forms.

The research design of this study does not involve the use of "comparison" schools. Selection bias and related issues of non-comparability would, in our opinion, severely limit the utility of data collected from such schools. Rather, site visit protocols were designed to incorporate: (1) retrospective questions to permit before and after comparisons; and (2) several questions adapted from the Schools and Staffing Survey that allow limited comparisons with data presented in two recent Office of Research (OR) reports.

11 For a copy of the site visit protocols, contact Dr. Darrel Drury, Pelavin Associates, Inc., 2030 M Street, N.W., Suite 800, Washington, D.C. 20036.

CHAPTER IV: SITE DESCRIPTIONS

This chapter presents descriptive "portraits" of each of the six school districts examined for this study. These brief descriptive accounts illustrate how the unique histories, characteristics, and experiences of the six districts have shaped school restructuring initiatives. Contained within each district portrait are descriptions of two schools, one considered by local district administrators to be an example of successful reform implementation, the other an illustration of the challenges associated with decentralization. School names have been changed to ensure the anonymity of respondents at the school level.

San Diego, California

Context of Reform

San Diego is the fastest-growing community in one of the most technologically advanced, culturally diverse states in America. During the past five years, district schools have had to accommodate some 7,000 new students (a six percent increase), and, by the end of this century, enrollments are projected to increase by twice that number. Racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic changes have been equally dramatic. Five years ago, just one in five students enrolled in San Diego's public schools was Hispanic, and only one in five received Chapter 1 services. Today, Hispanics comprise about one-third of the district's students and more than one-third receive Chapter 1 funds.

Despite this picture of growing enrollments, increasing cultural diversity, and ever-expanding socioeconomic deprivation, the number of public schools serving San Diego's youth has remained frozen over the past five years and the district's full-time teaching staff has grown at only half the rate of student enrollments. Faced with annual budget cuts — $9.5 million in 1992-1993 and $22.5 million in 1991-1992 — the district has sought alternative means of meeting its students' needs. This has included the expansion of multi-track, year-round schools, the implementation of double-session kindergarten schedules, and the renovation and expansion of existing schools.

While these measures have provided some short-term relief, parent and community groups have begun to call for long-term solutions. Such concerns also recently gave rise to a failed statewide movement to expand choice in education through the adoption of a voucher system and have fueled legislation authorizing charter schools.

Reform at the District Level

Schools of the Future. The history of school reform in San Diego dates to the summer of 1986, when Superintendent Thomas Payzant, in consultation with the Board of Education, established the Schools of the Future Commission (SFC) to address the challenges facing San Diego's public schools in the 21st century. This blue ribbon citizens panel issued its report the following year, calling for a fundamental restructuring of schools "to experiment with new approaches and organization to help all students attain productive futures" (SFC, 1987). Specifically, the commission highlighted five key principles to guide the development of pilot "schools of the future":

- Empower individual schools to determine how best to teach students, within clear expectations set by the Superintendent and Board of Education.
- Encourage principals and teachers to work together in managing schools and the learning process.
- Allocate resources, incentives, and recognition to enhance school-based authority and the retention of good teachers in the classroom.
- Use diverse teaching approaches and curricula to respond to the diverse learning needs of students.
- Provide more rigorous school-based accountability — with fair, equitable, and objective methods to evaluate school performance — in return for more school-based authority. (SFC, 1987)

The ICLG and RLT: Mechanisms for Change. Upon accepting the commission's report, the Superintendent and Board of Education immediately outlined steps to implement its major recommendations. As part of that process, Superintendent Payzant invited teachers, administrators, and concerned citizens to form a steering committee, christened the Innovation and Change Leadership Group (ICLG), "to develop a comprehensive plan for implementing various elements of school reform" (San Diego United School District, 1988). In its first year, the newly established ICLG sponsored a series of semi-

nars designed to introduce school and central office staff to the theory and practice of school-based management and shared decision making. These seminars provided a common framework of understanding that helped to facilitate San Diego's experiment in school reform.

Beginning in the fall of 1987, district schools were invited to participate — on a school-by-school basis — in San Diego's school-based management project, with the ICLG overseeing the transition. In September of 1991, the ICLG was succeeded by the Restructuring Leadership Team (RLT), a steering committee composed of the elected representatives of key constituencies within the San Diego Unified School District. This group was responsible for overseeing the implementation of school-based management districtwide, beginning in 1992. Today, the RLT plays a major role in promoting change and coordinating services across San Diego's public schools. The RLT has responsibility for stimulating reforms in curriculum, accountability, human services, and community engagement, providing training opportunities, sharing successful practices, and joint problem solving.

The SDTA. Any account of San Diego's experiment in school-based management would be incomplete without examining the role of the San Diego Teachers' Association (SDTA) in the implementation of reform. The SDTA, an affiliate of the National Education Association, grew steadily, both in membership and in political influence, during the 1970s and 1980s. With the return of Hugh Boyle to the SDTA presidency in 1988, the union's rising influence reached a high water mark. In a previous term as president, a decade earlier, Mr. Boyle had established a reputation as an indomitable labor advocate. His return to office in 1988 thus affirmed the union's emergent status as a potent force in San Diego school politics.

Against this backdrop, many observers reacted with surprise when the SDTA did not resist reform, but, instead, embraced it. Working closely with Superintendent Payzant, Mr. Boyle went on record early as a supporter of the transition to school-based management, provided that restructuring did not infringe upon the union's hard-won gains through collective bargaining. By his own account, Mr. Boyle saw school-based management, first and foremost, as a vehicle for empowering teachers and improving their working life. Although the Board and central office placed more emphasis on the long-range objectives of improving student achievement and eliminating racial and ethnic inequities, the union's "professionalization" goals were deemed to be compatible with these ultimate objectives. An element of pragmatism undoubtedly colored this view. As one Board member observed: "We were faced with a simple choice — school-based management with the union's involvement or no school-based management at all."

The SDTA has effectively exercised its influence in shaping the implementation of school-based management in San Diego. In official documents governing the reform, the union has specified the scope of decision making devolved to school governance teams, as well as the composition of these teams and the procedure by which they are selected. Yet, while ensuring that teachers play an influential role in shared decision making at the school level, the SDTA has simultaneously circumscribed schools' decision-making authority. In its effort to preserve teachers' seniority rights, for example, the union has negotiated transfer procedures that severely limit schools' voice in staff selection. As one union representative concluded: "We have to be cautious about how much authority is handed over to school governance teams. Unchecked, school-based management could undermine years of union-negotiated gains."

Reform at the School Level

To represent the current state of San Diego's experiment in reform, two school sites were selected for study — Armstrong Junior High and Hancock Elementary School.

Armstrong Junior High School

Armstrong Junior High, located in a rapidly developing, socially and economically diverse neighborhood in San Diego's northeastern quadrant, has experienced substantial change during its brief history. When Armstrong opened in 1987, it was housed in a cluster of relocatables and served as the only exclusively seventh-grade school in the district. Three years later, the school moved to permanent facilities and, just one year after that, expanded its enrollment to include both seventh- and eighth-grade students. With districtwide implementation of school-based management in 1992, Armstrong was faced with still another change.

The lack of stability that has characterized Armstrong Junior High's brief history has proven to be a major obstacle to the implementation of school-based management, especially with regard to parent involvement in school governance issues. Because enrollment is limited to seventh- and eighth-grade

students, parents have been reluctant to "get involved." As one parent serving on the school governance council pointed out, "any impact that parents might have on the way the school is run would probably not be felt until their children had moved on to high school."

The experience of Armstrong also raises questions about the wisdom of districtwide, compulsory implementation of school-based management projects. The teachers at Armstrong, many of whom are cast in a traditional mold, did not seek an expanded decision-making role, and therefore, complied with the districtwide edict in only a limited way. Teachers serving on the school governance council, perceiving their principal as a highly competent administrator "working in their best interests," have not felt compelled to assert themselves in their new decision-making role.

Finally, as a junior high school, Armstrong lacks the kind of interdisciplinary cohesion characteristic of many middle schools, where teachers and students are grouped together to form a small number of "families" or "houses." The school's relatively amorphous structure may simply not lend itself to the kind of constituency involvement that school-based management demands.

John Hancock Elementary School

The experience of John Hancock Elementary School presents an entirely different picture of school reform in San Diego. Located in the mid-city community of Normal Heights, Hancock was one of the first schools to adopt site-based decision making.

Hancock's principal, who gained much of her administrative experience as a vice principal and counselor in San Diego's middle schools, has sought greater involvement from all stakeholders in the school community. The school has been particularly successful in attracting business partners in support of its educational goals. Parent involvement is also high. Two years ago, the school had no organized parent group. Today, two groups actively participate in school affairs — the Parent Council and the Bilingual Council.

The manner in which decisions are reached at Hancock reflects the principal's philosophy that "all stakeholders should decide the direction of the school and be held accountable for those decisions." The school governance council is, itself, more of a clearinghouse for ideas than a decision-making body per se. @indent1 = Issues are brought to the council by one of four standing committees, where they are discussed, and, if warranted, brought before the entire faculty for a decision.

Many of the most important changes that have followed in the wake of reform at Hancock involve the integration of school staff and the expansion of the school's link to parents and the community. Thus, the faculty recently voted to install phones in all classrooms to facilitate communication among teachers and parents. In another decision, state grant money was earmarked for integrating instruction in science and language arts. Finally, the faculty recently drafted a plan for teachers to visit one another's classrooms in an attempt to relieve some of the professional isolation characteristic of many elementary schools.

Conclusion

San Diego's approach to school-based management is distinguished by its emphasis on shared decision making, rather than on the expansion of individual schools' autonomy. In part, this is a reflection of economic and political realities. Annual cuts in funding for public education and the protectionist stance adopted by the SDTA have combined to produce strict limitations on schools' authority, especially in areas of budget and staffing.

Beyond these limiting factors, however, the manner in which school-based management was conceived in San Diego seems to have contributed to its present form. From its inception, school-based management has represented one of several parallel reforms, rather than a central restructuring strategy. Thus, school-based management, as practiced in San Diego, is as much a method of implementing district-level reforms as it is a means of empowering schools.

Santa Fe, New Mexico

Context of Reform

Santa Fe, situated atop a 7,000 foot high plateau at the base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and surrounded by the remnants of a 2,000 year old Pueblo Indian civilization, is haven to artists and tourists alike. It is also a multi-cultural city that takes great pride in its roots — indeed, local law demands that all downtown buildings be constructed in 17th century adobe style.

The Santa Fe Public School District serves some 12,500 students. About 60 percent are of Hispanic origin, while whites comprise the majority of the remainder. A little over one-third of the district's

students are considered "low income," qualifying for free or reduced-price lunches.

What difficulties the district has faced have been primarily financial. Per pupil expenditures in New Mexico are among the lowest in the nation, and district administrators express a consistent concern about getting sufficient funds to do their job.

Reform at the District Level

A Grassroots Approach. School-based management in Santa Fe traces its roots to the combined vision of the late Superintendent Edward Ortiz and the pioneering efforts of teachers at several of the district's schools. Faced with a traditional Board of Education, resistant to change, Superintendent Ortiz elected to go directly to the district's schools to implement his visionary ideas. Beginning in the late 1980s, a small number of schools began to nurture the first seeds of reform, planted, albeit unofficially, by an independent-minded superintendent. It was Mr. Ortiz's hope that, before his efforts could be thwarted, restructuring would blossom into a self-perpetuating movement that could sustain itself in the face of Board opposition.

The effectiveness of Superintendent Ortiz's grassroots approach to reform is perhaps best exemplified by the case of O'Casey Elementary School, the district's largest K-6 school. During the 1989-90 school year, the school's principal accepted a position as director of the state's Re: Learning Project. Mr. Ortiz encouraged the school staff to form a committee to select a new principal, with the understanding that he would honor their choice in making his recommendation to the Board. The committee ultimately selected one of its own, a teacher at O'Casey who held an administrative certificate. When the Board accepted the Superintendent's recommendation, school reform — with an emphasis on shared decision making — went into high gear at O'Casey. Just two years later, O'Casey's teachers were again faced with the task of hiring a new principal. They used the opportunity to draft a proposal for a bold new plan of self-governance, in which a team of teachers — one facilitator and three co-coordinators — would administer the school. With a widely acknowledged record of success to point to, established over the two previous years, even the tradition-bound Board was receptive to the idea, at least on a one-year provisional basis. Today, teacher-administrators are a reality at O'Casey, with the role of facilitator rotating among school staff every two years.

Unfortunately, Superintendent Ortiz did not live to see the fruits of his labor. At the time of his death, in 1990, school-based management reform had many detractors, including several Board members who had never fully accepted his vision. With the passing of Edward Ortiz, perhaps the strongest remaining force in support of restructuring came from outside the district. The Matsushita Foundation (Panasonic Corporation), which had established a supportive relationship with the district in 1987, provides both guidance and financial support for the fledgling reforms initiated by Superintendent Ortiz.

Today, Santa Fe School District is, at best, ambivalent in its commitment to decentralized decision making. It is a district in which a few individual schools continue to take the lead in reform, maneuvering in a climate of perpetual doubt about the degree of support they can expect from the Board and central office.

Structure of Reform. Although several of Santa Fe's schools began to implement school-based management reforms as early as the late 1980s, it was not until January of 1992 that the Board officially directed the Superintendent "to promulgate regulations and procedures that promote educational decision making and program planning at the local site level" (SFPS, Document 2420, 1992). Later that year, the central office drafted a set of official policies to guide the reform effort. If enacted, these guidelines would require: (1) that each school's governance structure be representative of the diversity of the school and representative of all constituencies, including administration (principals or assistant principals), a cross-section of staff, parents, and, in the case of high schools, students (business community representatives and students at the elementary and junior high levels would be optional); (2) that each school's governance structure acknowledge that the principal is responsible for the organization, administration, supervision, and outcomes of the school; (3) that the governance structure of each school be described in a written plan, approved by the central office, which should include the process of selecting members of the governance team, the team's decision-making structure (including a procedure for allowing staff to ratify decisions and/or a statement outlining the decisions that will be made by the principal or his/her delegates); (4) that the scope of the team's authority be clearly defined; (5) that a method of soliciting ideas from the various constituencies be determined; and (6) that a procedure for evaluating the site-based management program be implemented.

The scope and magnitude of decision-making authority devolved to schools in Santa Fe remains quite limited under school-based management. Although the use of committees to assist in the process of identifying candidates for school administrative positions is encouraged, the composition of these committees is determined by the Superintendent, and he/she may recommend a candidate to the Board not among those selected by the committee. In the case of teacher selection, a site committee may recommend candidates for the principal's consideration, but he/she is not bound by the committee's decision in making his/her recommendation to the Superintendent.

Reform at the School Level

Given the mixed signals that school site personnel have received form the central office and the Board, it is not surprising that individual schools have responded to school-based management with varying degrees of enthusiasm and success. Below, we examine the experience of two of the district's schools: Pueblo Middle School and Central High School.

Pueblo Middle School

Pueblo Middle School, located in a residential district in southern Santa Fe, draws its students from neighborhoods throughout the city and several smaller villages in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The student body is approximately 54 percent white (non-Hispanic), 45 percent Hispanic, and one percent Native American and other minority groups. According to state standards, about one-third of Pueblo's students qualify for special education services or reading/math remediation through Chapter 1.

Pueblo's transition to school-based management is closely linked to its adoption of the middle school philosophy in 1989. As a result, school staff often find it difficult to distinguish between those changes attributable to school-based management and those attributable to the new philosophy. By most accounts, however, the two reforms complement one another and are regularly cited as the bases of the school's perceived success. In the past five years, Pueblo has been selected as a New Mexico Re: Learning School, a member of the Coalition of Essential Schools, and the 1991 New Mexico Middle School of the year.

At Pueblo, representatives from each of the school's "families" — within-school subdivisions of faculty and students — meet each week to discuss school governance issues. However, all decisions are subject to a two-third majority vote of the faculty as a whole. Key decisions during the past year include the elimination of tracking and the mainstreaming of special education students. The latter reform has resulted in a dramatic reduction in pupil contact/teacher ratios (100 students per day vs. 150), since special education teachers now more fully share the instructional burden. While popular with staff, some parents argue that reforms of this nature are driving the "better" students out of the public school system and, increasingly, they express the concern that "teachers give most of their attention to the bottom 10 percent."

During the 1992-93 school year, Pueblo tested the limits of school reform in Santa Fe. In need of a new assistant principal, the school formed a committee to review the pool of applicants. When the committee's recommendation was rebuffed by the Board in a four to one vote, this was viewed by many as symbolic of the Board's lack of commitment to site-based decision making. The incident delivered a blow to the morale of school staff and underscored the limits of reform in Santa Fe.

Central High School

Central High School, which opened its doors just five years ago, occupies an impressive new building in southern Santa Fe, a short distance from O'Casey Elementary School. But, in contrast to its neighboring institution, Central has lagged behind in implementing school-based management reforms.

Several factors have contributed to the difficulties experienced at Central High. First, the principal — although highly respected and thought by all to have the students' best interests at heart — has had considerable difficulty in adjusting to the give and take of shared decision making. He reserves the right to "veto" council decisions with which he disagrees and has exercised that prerogative on more than one occasion. In one instance, he refused to accept a staff-approved flexible scheduling plan and, in another, he vetoed a strict new attendance policy.

The lack of adequate parental input into the decision-making process has also contributed to the difficulties experienced at Central. There is only one parent representative on the governance council and only 15 active members of the parents' association, VOICE. While the officers of VOICE would like to expand its membership, without explanation, they have been denied access to the names and addresses of other parents. Parents also complain of a lack of access to standardized test scores upon which they can judge the success of new programs.

Finally, many of Central's teachers express a loss of faith in the future of school-based management. As one puts it, "the dream is gone ... there is no magic in this school." They complain of the traditional administrative style of the principal and their growing distrust in the ability of council members to represent their interests.

Conclusion

Santa Fe has moved slowly and with some ambivalence toward decentralized management. While a few schools, like O'Casey and Pueblo, have assumed leadership in implementing school-based management, others have lagged behind. The future of reform in the district now lies with the central office and the school board. If school-based management is to succeed districtwide, those who are vested with authority must begin to relinquish it, and in the process, reaffirm their commitment to reform.

Monroe County, Florida

Context of Reform

The Monroe County School District stretches some 106 miles, from Key Largo to Key West. It consists of three distinct regions: the Upper Keys, running from Key Largo to Long Key; the Middle Keys, extending from the Long Key Viaduct to Bahia Honda; and the Lower Keys, stretching from Big Pine Key to Key West.

The District encompasses 13 elementary and secondary schools that serve some 8,000 students. While the Upper Keys have grown in population in recent years, the Middle and Lower Keys have experienced a steady decline in school enrollments. In terms of racial and ethnic composition, the Monroe County School District has remained relatively stable. Today, the vast majority of students are white (73%), followed by Hispanics (18%), and African Americans (9%), representing essentially the same composition as five years ago.

Reform at the District Level

Motivating Factors. In 1971, Monroe County School District began to move from a conventional organizational and administrative structure to a decentralized system of school-based management. Two principal factors motivated this decision:

- the long distances separating the three population clusters posed problems for centralized management and communication; and
- the equitable distribution of limited resources was deemed to be more difficult in a centralized school system than in a decentralized system.

Ironically, the impetus behind decentralization was ex-Superintendent A.J. "Bookie" Henriquez, who began his tenure as Superintendent in 1969 by quadrupling the central office administrative staff and adopting a highly centralized system of management. But, in 1971, faced with the inadequacies of the centralized system that he had previously embraced, Superintendent Henriquez took the first steps toward decentralizing decision making in Monroe County. First, he made the district's principals part of his top management team and simultaneously engaged both central office and school administrators in a year-long training program in collaborative management. Second, principal's salaries were nearly doubled, making them the highest paid administrators in the district after the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for Operations. Finally, district staff functions were changed from supervisory and directive to supporting and facilitating.

Within two years, site-based budgeting was fully implemented and site-based planning teams had been established to advise principals in matters concerning budget, staffing, and curriculum. Originally, all planning team members were appointed by the principal, but at the insistence of the teachers' union, which was founded in the mid-1970s, two staff representatives are now elected at each school. Through the establishment of school advisory councils (SACs), parents and community members have also been given a voice. Today, school-based management is part of the culture of the Monroe County School District. Although State-mandated curriculum frameworks, developed in the mid-1980s, reduced the autonomy of individual schools in determining what to teach, and a series of budget cuts have substantially reduced discretionary spending, the essential elements of school-based management, put in place two decades ago, are fundamentally unchanged.

The Central Role of the Principal. School-based management, as conceived and implemented in Monroe County, places considerable emphasis on the role of the principal as the key decision maker at the school level and relatively less emphasis on collaborative management. This is spelled out in the current contract between the district and the United Teachers of Monroe: "The building-level planning team shall serve in an advisory capacity to the principal who shall make the final determination with

respect to all matters discussed among team members." Thus, the extent to which teachers and parents have input into decision making is determined largely by the management styles of individual principals. Although district rules require that two of the faculty representatives to the planning team be elected, other teacher representatives are selected in a manner determined by the principal. Parents exert some influence over decision making through their participation in the School Advisory Councils, but they do not sit directly on the planning teams.

Decision-Making Authority at the School-Site. Under school-based management, each school center receives an annual allocation based on a formula which sets a dollar value for each FTE student. Prior to restructuring, the central office controlled the budget directly, and those principals who were the most effective lobbyists often acquired more than their share of the district's resources — i.e., the most experienced and most costly staff, the best facilities and amenities (e.g., air conditioning), etc. With the introduction of site-based budgeting, these additional resources have become liabilities to be paid for out of a single lump sum allocation. Although some adjustments have been made in this regard (e.g., utilities are currently paid at the district level and a minimal adjustment is made for schools with staff salaries above the district average), smaller schools and schools with more costly staffs continue to suffer inequities under the present system. Seven of the district's 13 schools presently operate "in the red," carrying deficits over from year to year. As a result, most schools have little discretionary power over budgeting matters. Still, a few schools have accumulated substantial surpluses — in one case, amounting to $300,000.

Under the current system, principals are hired by the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent. A committee of teachers, administrators, and parents, appointed by the Superintendent, generally provides guidance in the selection process. Other school staffing decisions are made by the principal with varying degrees of input from the building planning team.

Curriculum guidelines, based on state-determined curriculum frameworks, are developed at the district level with input from district-wide committees. The implementation of these guidelines, including the selection of supplementary reading, is left to the individual school. However, important program changes — e.g., a move toward "customer focused" schools and the recent change from a nine-week to a six-week grading period — are often initiated at the central office level. This has led one principal to conclude: "We don't have school-based management, but, rather, 'shared decision making' — that is, the district sometimes shares its decisions with the schools."

The Role of the Teachers' Union. School-based management was in place in Monroe County several years before the teachers' union was formed. While generally supportive of the ideas of decentralization, the union leadership is decidedly cynical regarding the manner in which it has been implemented. According to the union president, the key objectives of school-based management as it exists in Monroe County are: (1) to enhance public relations; (2) to create divisions among teachers and, thus, weaken the union; and (3) to facilitate the acquisition of grant money. In recent years, the union has argued — albeit unsuccessfully — for the right of planning teams to over-rule principals and for the election of all teacher representatives.

Vision for the Future. Upon the retirement of Superintendent Henriquez, the Monroe County School District elected a new superintendent who assumed office in January of 1993. The new superintendent, Robert Walker, has spent most of his professional life in the district and, thus, has strong views concerning both the advantages and inadequacies of school-based management. One of the problems with the current system, in his view, is the lack of articulation among school centers. As he puts it, "we have 13 feudal states — they dig their moats, erect their towers, and occasionally shout at one another." He also expresses concerns about the carry over provision of school-site budgeting, pointing to one school which, despite having accumulated a substantial surplus, failed to allocate funds for books to support the music program. This is linked to the broader issue of equity in resource allocation, alluded to earlier. Larger schools have a distinct advantage under the current system, since their fixed overhead costs represent a smaller proportion of total budget. Finally, Walker argues that, with the emphasis on annual school improvement plans, school-based management does not encourage long-term planning.

Reform at the School Level

Two school sites illustrate the implementation of school-based management in Monroe County: Thomas Edison Elementary School and Franklin Delano Roosevelt Middle School.

Thomas Edison Elementary School

Thomas Edison Elementary School, located in Key West, serves nearly 600 students enrolled in pre-K through the fifth grade. Slightly more than half of its students are white (52%), with the remainder divided among African Americans (29%), Hispanics (18%), and other racial/ethnic groups (1%). More than half receive free or reduced lunch, up four percent from five years ago.

The school's principal is well liked by students and teachers alike, and there are no visible signs of conflict in this school. Teachers from each grade level elect their own representatives to the school's planning team and, collectively, seem to feel that they have a reasonable degree of input into school-level decision making. Yet, most contend that school-based management has been less than fully successful at Edison. Teachers point to relatively mundane issues such as "duty free" lunches or a change in the scheduling of the school carnival as leading matters decided by the planning team in the past year. The chairperson of the school's lay advisory council is more candid in her appraisal, observing that "not very much" has been accomplished under decentralized decision making.

The reasons for school-based management's failure to flourish at Edison are complex and, at the same time, subtle. First, although popular, the school's principal is a traditional administrator, accustomed to making his own decisions, who seems reluctant to involve teachers fully in collaborative decision making. Faculty appointments are made with input from the planning team, but the principal has the final word when it comes to hiring. Thomas Edison's principal also seems reluctant to provide teachers with all of the information that they may need to contribute to the planning process. In one recent meeting of the planning team, for example, he shared information on student outcomes, but made a point of not providing comparative data pertaining to other schools. The difficulty in implementing school-based management at Thomas Edison Elementary is also partly a function of the complacency of its faculty. There are few burning issues at the school, and teachers see little reason to assert themselves. Finally, many observers at the school argue that major decisions are still made at the central office, with little input from schools, and that school-based management has been "as successful as the superintendent has allowed it to be."

Franklin Delano Roosevelt Middle School

Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) Middle School, also located in Key West, serves some 860 sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students. The school is predominantly white (66%), with equal proportions of African-American and Hispanic children (17% and 16%, respectively), and one percent from other racial/ethnic backgrounds. About one-third of FDR's students receive free or reduced lunch.

Like many middle schools across the country, Franklin Delano Roosevelt is divided into "teams" of faculty and students. Each of its five teams is represented on the school planning team, and, with one exception, all are elected representatives. Planning team meetings are run with the efficiency of an executive board meeting. There is a free flow of information, and *all* decisions are reached by consensus.

Much of the credit for the successful functioning of school-based management at FDR goes to its current principal and his predecessor, Robert Walker, the recently elected Superintendent. Both administrative leaders have sought to involve teachers fully in the decision-making process. For example, throughout the school's history, all staffing decisions have been made in accordance with the desires of the school planning team. The current principal has spent most of his professional life as a social studies teacher in the district, and this is reflected in his natural understanding of teachers' issues.

Recently, the school applied for and received a state grant for improving technology in the classroom. The planning team is presently engaged in a deliberative process designed to determine the most equitable and efficient allocation of these funds. Other planning team decisions in the past year include the decision to fund a mental health counselor and the decision to hire a part-time chorus teacher.

If school-based management is judged in terms of its ability to facilitate communication between administrators and staff and to contribute to an atmosphere of optimism and mutual respect, then, by all appearances, it has been successful at FDR.

Conclusion

More than two decades have passed since school-based management was first introduced in Monroe County. With years of experience to draw upon, and new leadership at the helm, it seems likely that we will witness some modifications of the original model of reform in the coming years. But school-

based management is now an integral part of the district's culture, and the basic tenets of decentralization are unlikely to be challenged.

Chicago, Illinois

Context of Reform

The Chicago public school system is the third largest school district in the nation, and, for the last two decades, among the most troubled. In part, the problems that Chicago's schools face are a reflection of the increasingly disparate social and economic conditions that have enveloped the city. Currently, some 650,000 of the city's inhabitants receive public assistance, and about 200,000 households have annual incomes below $10,000. In 1992, fully 80 percent of entering first-graders were from low-income families, 88 percent were minorities, and half lived with their mothers in single-parent families. Indeed, in 67 percent of Chicago's elementary schools, *every* child comes from a background of poverty.

Without significant attention and individualized help, many of these children are at risk of not graduating from high school and are unlikely to fulfill their potential as productive citizens. Currently, high school graduation rates are well under 50 percent and math and reading scores average in the 25th percentile on nationally normed tests.

Over the past two decades, the combined effect of severe budget cuts and growing teacher frustration over working conditions have exacerbated the school system's problems. In 1979, the Chicago school system narrowly avoided declaring bankruptcy through the passage of a controversial special bond referendum, and, in 1987, years of mounting teacher dissatisfaction culminated in a devastating 21-day strike. These conditions have served to catalyze a reform movement to radically decentralize the Chicago school system by shifting authority from Pershing Road (the central office) to the city's individual school centers.

Reform at the District Level

For some years prior to the system-wide teachers' strike of 1987, a broad coalition of community and business leaders had been meeting to try to initiate change in the Chicago schools. The strike only served to strengthen their resolve. Afterward, the Mayor's office called an "Education Summit," during which the membership of the reform coalition grew to reflect an even broader base of community support.

By April of 1988, a far-reaching and radical proposal for restructuring the Chicago Public School system was drafted. The main tenet of the proposal called for site-based management, namely the shifting of authority to governing boards — known as Local School Councils (LSC) — at each school in the system. After much heated debate, the Illinois legislature passed a variant of the proposal in the form of the School Reform Act (Public Act 85-1418), thereby transforming the highly centralized, bureaucratic school district into a system wherein each and every school was given the authority and responsibility for its own operation. Equally significant, in the interest of systemic change, principals lost the privilege of tenure, teachers lost their traditional right to claim a job in a particular school, and the role of the School Finance Authority was expanded to include oversight of district-wide education reform.

According to the School Reform Act, each LSC is composed of eleven members — each with one vote. By design, parents (six representatives) and community members (two representatives) constitute a numerical majority on each LSC, sharing governance with the principal and two teachers. The LSC has the legal authority to hire the school principal, approve the education plan and budget of the school, and allocate available resources to implement the plan. Teachers are further involved in the implementation of curriculum and program improvement through service in a strictly *advisory* capacity on the Professional Personnel Advisory Committee (PPAC).

Under the reform, the authority of the Superintendent of Schools and other central office administrators has been significantly curtailed. Their roles have been transformed into ones of coordination and the provision of supportive services for the schools. Not surprisingly, this has created considerable tension among the Board of Education, the Superintendent, and the School Finance Authority.

Reform at the School Level

Two school sites, one a high school and one an elementary school, illustrate the dramatic reforms that have been implemented in Chicago. Each represents some degree of success and some degree of failure as restructuring moves into its third year of implementation.

Cleveland High School

Cleveland High School is a school in transition. The principal is one of very few that Local School Councils have recruited from outside the district. Innova-

tive, energetic, and resourceful, he secured outside funding to implement his own personal vision of decentralization. His goal is to break down this "impersonal" high school of 1,616 students into four "houses," or Schools-Within-a-School (SWS), incorporating both vocational and academic courses in each.

In the SWS program, teachers work in teams, curriculum is more tightly integrated and oriented toward the world of work, assessments are outcome-based, and both students and teachers are forced to become more involved with each other. Though this plan has been approved by the LSC, some claim that the principal has not adequately informed his teaching staff of the structure and thrust of the new program, and reservations persist. In addition, some teachers — particularly those who have served the school for some time — consider the plan to be unrealistic for the school, and express considerable displeasure regarding the many changes that they must endure.

Yet, more than 100 new students have chosen to attend the school, and this is viewed as a tribute to the attractiveness of the new program.

Hans Christian Andersen Magnet School

The Hans Christian Andersen Magnet School was designed to be an innovative and racially integrated school long before site-based management was implemented, featuring both a strong academic curriculum and a specialization in communication arts. Although it is located in a tony, upper-middle-class neighborhood adjacent to Lake Michigan, the Andersen school reflects the racial/ethnic composition and socioeconomic conditions of the city at large. Of the 1,756 students who attend Andersen, 73 percent are either African American, Hispanic, Asian, or American Indian, 63 percent are from low-income families, and 10 percent are limited English-proficient.

Structurally, Andersen was designed as an "open school," consisting of several "pods" instead of classrooms. Strong parental involvement, team teaching, and innovative instruction have been characteristic of the school from its beginning. When the school was first dedicated as a magnet institution, teachers had to apply and serve on a temporary basis until they could demonstrate compatibility with the school structure and program.

Decentralization in the Chicago school system has not worked as well at Andersen as at it has at Cleveland. Teachers at Andersen, who have historically enjoyed great autonomy and freedom, now see the reform as instrumental in the erosion of that autonomy. Under the new system of site-based management, the teacher representatives are but a small faction of the total LSC and, although their advice is solicited through the PPAC, they do not enjoy the professional status and freedom that they once had.

To complicate matters, the principal hired by the LSC since the implementation of reform resigned in mid-semester. Some suggest that the replacement hire has not shown himself to be compatible with the philosophy, style, and educational approach of the school. As a result, Andersen represents a class of schools where conflict has in fact increased as a result of reform.

Conclusion

At present, the Chicago School System can hardly be described as having turned around. There is growing dissatisfaction with the pace of reform, largely because expected benefits in terms of student performance have not yet materialized. Nor have fiscal affairs improved substantially. There has been a $400,000 budget shortfall this fiscal year, and, as a result, the city's schools were unable to open until the courts intervened. Cuts in the operating budget will surely set back or substantially modify the five-year old city-wide reforms.

Rochester, New York

Context of Reform

The city of Rochester is a town dominated by big business: Eastman Kodak, Xerox, and Bausch and Lomb, among other corporate giants, maintain offices there. Although the presence of these large corporations provides a relatively stable employment base for the greater metropolitan area, the city of Rochester itself continues to experience the effects of the national recession. Today, nearly nine in ten students come from families poor enough to qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

Beginning in the mid-1980s, Rochester's corporate executives and the Rochester community in general began to express growing concern about the quality of education students were receiving in the city's public schools. The overall performance of the school system had been on a steady decline and the proportions of minority and poor students were increasing from year to year. Ultimately, the gradual but persistent change in the make-up and performance of the student body led corporate leaders and minority advocates to call for change.

Reform at the District Level

Reform as Part of the Collective Bargaining Process. In 1987, largely in response to the concerns of big business and advocates for the city's at-risk youth, the president of the Rochester Teachers' Association, Adam Urbanski, and the Superintendent of the Rochester Public Schools committed themselves to working together toward the goal of improving the performance of the school system by giving greater influence to those who are closest to and work most directly with students. The ensuing negotiations, which extended beyond wages and working conditions, resulted in a collective bargaining agreement that laid the foundation for a complete restructuring of the Rochester school system.

The agreement specified that the traditional centralized decision making at the district level was to be largely replaced by a process of shared-decision making at the school-site. That is, each of Rochester's 51 schools was to be run, to a great extent, by a principal and a planning team composed of various school-level constituencies. The planning team would be composed of the school principal (and administrative staff designated by the principal), three parents, three students (at the secondary level only), and a number of teachers, all elected by their peers. The number of teachers elected would equal one more than the total of all other members on the planning team, thereby ensuring teachers a majority on each and every team in the district. However, further negotiations resulted in a decision-making process known as "constituency consensus," wherein each constituency, no matter what its numerical representation on a school's planning team, can only cast one vote.

What role the planning teams can play has, however, been confusing. Questions have arisen regarding the kinds of issues that can be dealt with, how far the boundaries of a planning team's authority can reach, and the precise nature of the principal's responsibility. Conflicting guidelines in the agreement stating that the principal has responsibilities for day-to-day operations of the school and that planning teams "may deal with any issue that is directly or indirectly related to instruction, student performance, and school environment/improvement" have created considerable confusion and have contributed to a lack of focus.

Changing Demographics. With the gradual but persistent change in the racial composition and socioeconomic status of students in the school system, students' needs have been changing as well. Considerable dissatisfaction has arisen within the community because the make-up and orientation of those serving the students has not changed correspondingly. Currently, 80 percent of the staff serving Rochester students live outside the city and, therefore, do not send their own children to the Rochester City Public Schools.

Leaders from the minority community are now seeking to take an active role in the governance of the city's public schools, and appear to be posing a significant challenge to those who have been in positions of authority for many years. Their stand on reform and their position regarding the teachers' union is not yet clear and, consequently, neither is the future of reform for the district's schools.

Reform at the School Level

The issue of responsiveness to the changing needs of students is prevalent to varying degrees in schools throughout the Rochester community. It is an issue that has preoccupied local school planning teams, resulting in considerable tensions among factions within teams, as well as the ability of teams to focus on educational issues. The two school cases that are presented below demonstrate how school communities deal with similar pressures differently in site-based management settings.

Earl Warren High School

Earl Warren High School has 1354 students, of which about three-quarters are minority (mostly African Americans). There is a tension in the school that is almost palpable. On the day of our site visit, a student was seriously injured in a fight with her boyfriend near the day care center which serves children of students attending the school. In the afternoon, a false fire alarm resulted in a schoolwide evacuation of students and faculty. As students reentered, one African-American student was overheard to say, "Well, it will be interesting to hear what the newspapers will be saying about the dumb [students] at Warren this time."

The local school planning team has experienced considerable difficulty dealing with such problems. The students on the planning team are critical of its progress, noting with an air of cynicism, that the only thing the team has done for students in the recent past is to initiate "hall sweeps." Students state that they have a hard time respecting teachers and administrators who remain preoccupied with issues other than those of substantive educational significance and who heatedly argue in plain view of students. These student concerns are validated by faculty who acknowledge that racial tensions among

staff in the school and among staff on the school planning team have come close to physical violence. Though there is some committee work and some thought given to substantive issues, the preoccupation of the planning team has been with tensions within the team and discipline in the school community.

Earl Warren High School does have an energy and vitality that appears ready to be harnessed and pointed in positive directions. However, at present, it seems the only thing that the planning team can do is to react to the pervasive turmoil that currently grips the school.

Jefferson Middle School

Jefferson Middle School has in many ways a more difficult student body to deal with than Earl Warren High School. While the composition of the student body is approximately the same, a greater proportion of students come from low-income families (nearly three-quarters of students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunches). These students are also more difficult to deal with because of their age. Both administrators and teachers let out a sigh of relief at the end of each day when the students have left: "Oh, what heavenly quiet!"

Though the school planning team has encountered many difficult problems, it can be characterized as possessing an ability to address the challenges that the school presents and an ability to concentrate on meeting the needs of students and, indeed, the entire school community. This is not to say that the school team has completely resolved all of the issues regarding the special needs of its students or the professional concerns of its teachers, but, unlike many other schools, it has applied its energies to addressing critical concerns of the school.

What differentiates Jefferson Middle School from other schools in Rochester, according to the principal, is "that we have a very low level of conflict." Teachers, parents, administrators, and volunteers from local corporations have pooled their knowledge and resources to develop a school philosophy and to forge a creative educational plan for achieving the goals and objectives of the school.

Structurally, the large middle school is divided into "houses" of no more than 350 students, each with its own core of teachers, support staff, and administrators. By implementing "block scheduling," the school has been better able to meet the needs of Jefferson's students. Teachers, who are with the same students throughout middle school, get to know the students on a more personal basis and, therefore, can respond with more understanding to their needs. Block scheduling also enables teachers to work more collaboratively, to have more planning time, and to spend less time dealing with students' disruptive movements from one class to another.

The benefits of a school organized and programmed to meet the needs of students are evident in increased levels of staff satisfaction, student performance, and in the perceived desirability of the school as measured by an increase in the number of students applying for admission each year.

Conclusion

The Rochester School Reform effort has been under way for approximately five years. There are currently many challenges to the future development of the reform. Change in administration and philosophy, concerns at the union level, and racial tensions in the community all pose threats to the future of reform in Rochester. Adam Urbanski observes, however, "Democratization of education has occurred in Rochester Schools and this change will never be reversed."

Prince William County, Virginia

Context of Reform

Prince William County, in northern Virginia, is one of the fastest growing counties in the state, having almost doubled in size in the last decade. The county's current school population of 42,000 students, enrolled in 58 schools, is expected to grow by more than 12,000 over the next ten years. In just five years, the district's minority population has increased by more than 40 percent — now at 20 percent of the total — and language diversity has increased at a comparable rate.

Reform at the District Level

Implementing Reform – Five Pilot Schools. In 1987, Edward Kelly began his tenure as District Superintendent with a plan to decentralize management to the school level. With a vision of teachers as "model learners" and school administrators as "instructional leaders," his plan was to devolve decision-making authority to those who worked daily with students and, thus, better able to anticipate and respond to their changing and diverse needs.

In preparation for the move to school-based management, the Superintendent first appointed a study committee — made up of personnel from both indi-

vidual schools and the central office — to study school districts across North America operating under decentralized management. The management system in Edmonton Canada so impressed the committee that the director of the Edmonton program was hired as a consultant and the district's restructuring plan was ultimately modeled on Edmonton's. Later, teachers and parents were also encouraged to visit model programs to assuage their concerns and reservations about the reform effort.

Implementation of school-based management began in 1989 in five pilot schools, selected from a pool of ten volunteer schools. In addition to testing the feasibility of school-based management in Prince William County, the pilot schools were also useful in alleviating fears by providing in-service programs to administrators, teachers, and parents. In these workshops, participants learned about planning, budgeting, and collaborative decision-making — skills they would require once school-based management was implemented county-wide.

Development of Site-Based Budgeting. In Prince William County, the majority of the school system's budget is allocated to schools in lump sums based on fixed administrative costs and the numbers and types of students in each school. The details of budget allocation for each school are made part of a school plan, containing expenditures for staff and program. The plan is prepared by the principal in collaboration with teachers, parents, and, sometimes, students. Once its school plan is approved, individual schools have limited discretion to move resources from one budget category to another, but any major changes must be approved by the Superintendent.

To aid in planning its annual budget, each school is provided with a projection of the number and types of students to be accommodated, an estimate of the school resource allocation they can expect, a listing of average salaries for each classification of personnel, and the formulas used for arriving at the school resource allocation. When they are straightforward, school plans can be approved simply by the Superintendent. However, plans that require exceptions or deviations from school board policy must be reviewed and approved by the Board.

Divesting Authority to the School Principal. The main goal of site-based management in Prince William County Schools, according to the Superintendent, is to improve student learning. This, he believes, will be accomplished by empowering those most directly involved in the teaching process — especially principals, teachers, and parents.

In Prince William County, the principal is held ultimately accountable for a quality of instruction that meets the needs of students and for enlisting teachers and parents, as advisors, to help plan and develop an effective school-based program. In part, this is enabled by a streamlining of the administrative process. Prior to the reorganization, there were seven reporting levels between school principals and the superintendent; today, there is only one.

Reform At The School Level

Two sites, one an elementary and the other a high school, were visited in the preparation of this report. Both of these schools represent some of the difficulties schools have faced in trying to adjust to site-based planning and budgeting.

Pineview Elementary School

Pineview Elementary School represents a mid-size (682 students), middle-class school which, while not trouble free, has gone a long way toward implementing successful site-based decision making in the district.

The school advisory council consists of eight parent volunteers and eight teachers representing all grade levels. Pursuing the district's goal of improving instruction, discussions of alternative assessment strategies for determining student progress are underway. Pineview also has worked to modify its curriculum so that it provides instruction more in line with better child development principles, while simultaneously increasing emphasis on mathematics instruction. Finally, the school is committed to spending much of its discretionary funds on the installation of a computer lab, including the hiring of additional personnel to staff it.

On a less positive note, reduced allocations from the central office (because of a declining low-income student enrollment) have forced the school to abolish the position of a reading specialist. Both parents and teachers are discouraged by this and other budget cuts that affect instruction.

Chesapeake High School

Chesapeake High School has faced considerable difficulty in implementing school-based management, due in some measure to changes in school demographics and partly to the site-based budgeting process itself.

Historically, Chesapeake High has served students from largely middle-class neighborhoods, with

some student representation from higher socioeconomic status neighborhoods as well. With recent changes in school zoning, the school suffered an overall decrease in enrollments, and many of its students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds were lost to a newly constructed school. As a consequence of the site-based budgeting process, the school was faced with implementing a plan developed and approved before the effects of rezoning were known, producing a budget shortfall of approximately $90,000. The original school plan called for an increased emphasis on critical thinking and problem solving, and, to accomplish this goal, students having difficulty were to receive additional instructional time. Budget cuts threatened the plan, and, indirectly, the whole concept of site-based management and planning at Chesapeake. Fortunately, a compromise was ultimately reached between the principal and the central office that permitted the plan to be implemented.

Still, the school has experienced other significant changes that, taken together, pose significant challenges to site-based management, including a substantial increase in the failure rate for incoming students and a considerable turnover in the school advisory council.

Conclusion

Prince William County illustrates the limits of reform and, specifically, site-based budgeting. Restructuring does not produce more revenue — it simply allows the staff and community a greater voice in how to use those funds which are available. Since the vast majority of funds are committed to staff salaries, discretionary spending is, by necessity, severely limited, undermining the ability of individual schools to plan effectively and to implement meaningful change.

CHAPTER V
CROSS-SITE ANALYSIS

In the previous chapter, each of the six school districts selected for analysis is described in terms of its unique history, characteristics, and experiences with collaborative management. The present chapter draws from these descriptive accounts and other data to provide a comparative, cross-site analysis, based on the model set forth in Chapter III.

The chapter is divided into five sections. First, the six districts are described in terms of a number of factors that have shaped reform initiatives in each site. Second, the scope and magnitude of decision-making authority devolved to school sites are examined, focusing on the areas of budget, hiring, and curriculum/program. Third, the redistribution of authority at the school level is investigated in terms of the balance of power and influence held by principals, teachers, and parents. Fourth, the relative success of restructuring in each of the six districts is assessed in terms of various intermediate outcomes, including efficiency, parental involvement, curriculum/program, and teacher professionalism. Finally, several factors associated with the successful implementation of school-based management are identified and discussed.

Factors Shaping Reform

There is no single blueprint or model for effective school-based management programs. As Purkey (1990) has observed, each school district seems to adapt decentralized management to its own needs, shaping it to fit its particular cultural, historical, and environmental conditions. Some of the factors that are known to shape a district's reform initiative include: (1) its objectives; (2) its initiators; and (3) the role of teachers' unions and other groups or individuals in its implementation. Table V-1 presents an overview of these and other factors for each of the six districts examined in this report.

With the exception of Monroe County, which first implemented decentralized management more than twenty years ago, school-based management represents a relatively new reform initiative in each of the districts selected for study. While two of the six districts examined in this report — San Diego and Prince William County — initially implemented school-based management on a limited, voluntary basis, all six districts now require the participation of all schools.

In each of the six districts studied, the improvement of student learning or student outcomes is cited among the principal objectives of reform. In several of these districts, other objectives are recognized as well. In Santa Fe, for example, district goals include the enhancement of student self-esteem and the support of teacher professionalism, and, in Rochester, objectives include the improvement of instruction and school climate. Prince William County originally articulated two goals — increasing the academic performance of students and saving money through the more efficient utilization of resources. However, the latter objective has been de-emphasized, following a central office directive.

In contrast to other districts examined in this report, in Chicago, reform was initiated by groups *outside* of the school system. There, several vocal reform/advocacy groups constituted the driving force behind a movement to enact legislation aimed at restructuring Chicago's schools. Not surprisingly, the character of school-based management in Chicago is profoundly different from that in other districts. The level of perceived crisis at the time of decentralization was high, and the scope and magnitude of reform has been correspondingly great. In contrast, in each of the five remaining districts, school-based management was initiated by the superintendent, acting either alone or in concert with other stakeholders.

The initiators of reform, along with those who play key roles in its implementation, greatly influence the boundaries of reform and define its desirable outcomes. In both Monroe and Prince William Counties, for example, district superintendents took the lead in devolving authority to school principals, who, in turn, were instrumental in the implementation of reform. As a result, in both districts, restructuring initiatives emphasize the authority of school principals and place relatively little emphasis on the role of teachers and other stakeholders. In contrast, teachers' unions played a critical part in the initiation of reform in San Diego and Rochester, and, in these sites, teachers have a substantially greater voice in decision making. Similarly, in Santa Fe, where the late superintendent worked closely with local teachers to implement school-based management reform, teacher professionalism is officially recognized as a key objective.

The Scope and Magnitude of Authority Devolved to Schools

There is widespread agreement among researchers that budget, staffing, and curriculum/ program represent the key areas in which decision-making power is typically decentralized under school-based management (David, 1989; Clune and White, 1988; Garms, Guthrie, and Pierce, 1978). Based in part on data presented in Tables V-2 through V-4, this section examines the degree of authority devolved in each of these areas and some of the problems encountered in the process of reform.

Budget

Each of the six districts examined for this study employs a budgeting process that permits some discretionary spending at the school-site level. In some districts, these funds are limited to monies allocated for materials/supplies, professional leave, library acquisitions, and the like (e.g., Santa Fe), while in others school governance councils control sums approaching $1,000,000 (e.g., Chicago). In some cases, as in San Diego, budgetary control is divided between two councils. The school-based management team determines how district funds for school improvement and state compensatory education funds are spent, but a separate School Advisory Committee (SAC) is responsible for making recommendations for the allocation of Chapter 1 funds. This dichotomization of authority is required because union contract provisions mandate that teachers must comprise one-half of the governance team, while state law requires that parents constitute a majority of the SACs. In Chicago, where parents have majority representation on the Local School Councils, a single committee controls both district allocations and Chapter 1 funds.

While most of the districts examined for this study retain centralized control over personnel allocations, schools in Monroe County and Prince William County must budget for both salary and nonsalary expenditures. These districts allocate funds to schools in ways that have created some inequities and, it would seem, some inefficiencies as well. In Monroe county, schools must cover the actual cost

TABLE V-1
Overview of School-Based Management in Six Districts

District	Objectives of Reform	Date of Reform	Implemented as a Pilot?	Currently District-wide?	Initiator of Reform	Key to Implementation of Reform	Governed by Provision in Collective Bargaining Agreement?
San Diego	To improve the quality of the learning experience and outcomes of students	1988	Yes	Yes	Superintendent and the Teachers' Union	No consensus	Yes
Santa Fe	To increase student academic performance To increase student self-esteem To enhance teacher professionalism	1992	No	Yes	Superintendent and the Teachers at Individual Schools	No consensus	No
Monroe County	To improve student outcomes	1972	No	Yes	Superintendent	Superintendent and School Principals	Yes
Prince William County	To improve student learning	1989	Yes	Yes	Superintendent	Superintendent and School Principals	N/A[1]
Chicago	To improve school performance To improve student performance	1988	No	Yes	Reform/Advocacy Groups and Parents	Parents	No
Rochester	To improve student learning, instruction, and school climate	1988	No	Yes	Superintendent and the Teachers' Union	Principals, Teachers, and the Business Community	Yes

1. Teacher's unions are not officially recognized by the state of Virginia and are therefore unable to negotiate collective bargaining agreements.

of personnel, and schools with more experienced — and, hence, more costly — staffs are at a disadvantage. Although a small fund (approximately $300,000) is set aside to help offset salary expenditures at schools with higher than average personnel costs, the adjustment is only partial. In Prince William County, schools pay for personnel according to a scheme which divides faculty and staff into various cost categories. While seemingly more equitable, this approach tends to discriminate against smaller schools, with greater relative fixed personnel costs. For example, according to 1993 fiscal year approved budgets, the district's four smallest high schools spent an average of 95.2 percent of budget on faculty and staff, while the three largest high schools spent an average of only 90.9 percent. The budgeting scheme employed by Prince William has the added disadvantage of encouraging inefficiency. Since schools incur the same cost for all personnel in a given category, regardless of actual salaries, there is no incentive to consider real costs in making staffing decisions. Moreover, because school plans are developed on the basis of *projected*, rather than actual, enrollments, schools are often faced with deficits beyond their control. This is illustrated by the experience of Chesapeake High School, which suffered a $90,000 budget shortfall in 1992-1993 as a result of district re-zoning. According to one school administrator, "that just wouldn't happen under a centralized system."

With the exception of Santa Fe and Rochester, the districts studied in this report permit schools to carry over funds from one year to the next, although in several cases, strict limitations are imposed. For example, in Prince William County, limits are set at $1,000 per year for elementary schools, $2,000 for middle schools, and $3,000 for high schools. In Monroe County, where there are no carry-over limits, one school has accumulated a surplus in excess of a quarter of a million dollars. This is a matter of some concern for at least one central office observer, who worries that some governance teams behave "more like bankers than educators."

Only two of the six districts — Monroe County and Prince William County — permit cost over-runs. In Monroe County, seven of thirteen schools currently operate in the red, carrying deficits over from one year to the next. While there is no limit to the amount that schools can overspend, they must develop long-term plans to reimburse the district for budget shortfalls. In Prince William County, if a school overspends its budget it is viewed as a "serious matter," and overexpended funds are subtracted from the next year's budget. According to Superintendent Edward Kelly, "this does not happen twice."

Staffing

With the exception of Chicago, where Local School Councils have the legal authority to hire principals for a term of four years, in the six districts studied, school administrators are hired by the Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Superintendent. Committees of school administrators, teachers, and parents typically advise the Superintendent, but their recommendations are not binding.

Apart from Santa Fe and Prince William County, in all districts studied, principals are vested with the authority to hire full-time staff. However, in those sites with a strong union presence — San Diego and Rochester — contractual agreements limit this authority somewhat. In the case of voluntary transfers, schools in San Diego must select from a list of five teachers with the greatest seniority. In the case of vacancies created by shifting student population, staff attrition, or for the maintenance of racial balance, both districts base staffing decisions solely on seniority.

In those districts where principals are vested with the authority to hire full-time staff, school-site governance teams or ad hoc committees of teachers and parents advise in the selection process. With the exception of Rochester, where all constituencies must agree on staffing decisions, principals retain final authority. The extent to which principals follow the recommendations of planning teams or ad hoc committees varies greatly from one school to the next.

Curriculum/Program

With the exception of Chicago, each of the districts examined for this study establishes specific curricular requirements which reflect broader curriculum frameworks determined at the state level. In four districts — San Diego, Monroe County, Prince William County, and Rochester — texts are selected at the district level, but, in all districts, teachers may select supplementary readings. In Santa Fe, schools may select instructional strategies and materials according to student needs (provided they adhere to state laws and guidelines), and, in Chicago, Local School Councils have the authority to establish curricula within the constraints of the Illinois state curriculum framework and applicable laws. Across all districts, teachers exert considerable influence over *how* instruction is provided, and they express little concern over the standardization of curricula.

TABLE V-2
Authority at the School Site: Budget

District	Authority at the School Site
San Diego	A portion of the total district budget is distributed to schools in a lump sum as discretionary money for nonsalary expenditures based upon a weighted per pupil allocation formula. Schools may carry over resources to the next year, except where prohibited by Federal regulation. School budgets are regularly monitored by the district budget office to ensure that schools do not go over budget.
Santa Fe	A portion of the total district budget is distributed to schools in a lump sum as limited discretionary money for nonsalary expenditures based upon a per pupil allocation formula. Discretionary money may only be transferred among the following categories: supplies/materials, professional leave, office supplies/materials, and library/audio-visual. Schools may not carry over resources to the next year.
Monroe County	A portion of the total district budget is distributed to schools in a lump sum as limited discretionary money for salary and nonsalary expenditures based upon an allocation formula that is based upon FTE staff + state and Federal categorical "add ons." Only the non-categorical money is discretionary. Schools may carry surpluses or deficits to the next year, except where prohibited by Federal regulation.
Prince William County	A portion of the total district budget is distributed to schools in a lump sum as discretionary money for salary and nonsalary expenditures based upon a fixed sum plus a weighted per pupil allocation formula. Once an individual school budget is approved, any transferring of funds must be approved by the superintendent. Schools may carry over funds if explicitly stated in a school plan within the following limits: $1,000/yr for elementary schools; $2,000/yr for middle schools; $3,000/yr for high schools.
Chicago	A portion of the total district budget is distributed to schools in a lump sum as discretionary money for salary and nonsalary expenditures based upon student enrollment. Schools have little discretion in transferring general funds, but have great discretion over state Chapter 1 funds. State Chapter 1 money may be carried over to the next school year within state guidelines.
Rochester	A portion of the total district budget is distributed to schools for nonsalary expenditures based upon a per pupil allocation formula. Eight pilot schools receive these funds on a lump-sum basis and have discretion across non-salary budget categories. For the remaining schools, the freedom to transfer funds between budget categories is granted only if explicitly stated in an individual school plan. Schools may not carry over resources to the next year.

TABLE V-3
Authority at the School Site: Staffing

District	Authority at the School Site
San Diego	Individual schools have limited authority to hire FT nonadministrative staff. In the case of voluntary transfers, schools must select from a list of five teachers with the greatest seniority. Staff must be selected from within district unless the pool of applicants is too "shallow." In that event, the assistant superintendent for that school may open up the search (this occurs about 15% of the time in the case of principals). Schools have the authority to hire temporary staff.
Santa Fe	Schools do not have the authority to hire FT staff, but, rather, recommend three candidates for each position to the assistant superintendent who has the authority to hire. On occasion, the district must impose a teacher upon a school.
Monroe County	Schools have the authority to hire FT nonadministrative staff. Schools must first advertise for a new position within the district, but have the freedom to recruit personnel from outside the district provided that they are certified. No consideration is given to seniority. The Board of Education must approve a teacher who is being considered to teach out of his/her field. Schools have the authority to hire temporary staff through the district personnel office in emergencies.
Prince William County	Schools do not have the authority to hire FT staff, but make recommendations regarding the hiring of teachers and principals. Schools have the authority to hire temporary staff.
Chicago	Schools have the authority to hire FT staff, including principals. Schools may recruit personnel from outside the district as long as they meet state certification requirements, and schools may open new positions if they have explicitly planned to do so and have the discretionary money to support the new position. Schools may hire temporary staff and substitutes with discretionary money.
Rochester	Schools have the authority to hire FT nonadministrative staff. Schools must consider candidates on a district list when hiring a new teacher, but may select or reject those candidates. Also, schools are not bound to select from among voluntary transfers. Schools may propose alternatives to district budget cuts by reallocating funds or redefining job responsibilities. Schools have the authority to hire temporary staff if they are certified and eligible.

TABLE V-4
Authority at the School Site: Curriculum/Program

District	Authority at the School Site
San Diego	Texts are selected at the district level in accordance with the California state framework, but schools may develop individual curricula using supplementary sources.
Santa Fe	Schools may select instructional strategies and materials according to student needs, provided that they adhere to state laws and guidelines. (Seventy percent of textbook funds must be spent on state-approved texts, while 30 percent may be spent on any text. If a school receives a waiver, it is exempted from the 70 percent restriction and may spend as much as 100 percent of its textbook allocation on any texts it wishes.)
Monroe County	Florida provides a curriculum framework and texts are selected for district-wide use by district- and school-level staff. How texts are used is left to individual schools, but given state rules and regulations, there is little latitude for individual school autonomy.
Prince William County	District-level staff select curricula and texts. Schools have no authority to establish individual curricula. Individual schools and teachers can select supplementary texts from a state approved list with permission of district officials.
Chicago	Local School Councils have the authority to establish curricula within the constraints of the Illinois state curriculum framework and applicable laws. Content and specific methods of instruction also are within the discretion of the individual school.
Rochester	Schools have considerable flexibility in establishing curricula within New York state regulations and law, but have exercised little initiative in this domain to date.

Schools in several districts have adopted broad programmatic changes, including block scheduling, thematic instruction, mainstreaming of special education students, and heterogeneous grouping. However, there is much evidence which suggests that the latter two innovations — mainstreaming and heterogeneous grouping — often represent top-down decisions. For example, at one school in San Diego, parents felt that they had little or no voice in the district's decision to mainstream special education students. In Santa Fe, parents expressed similar concerns about heterogeneous grouping policies. And, in Prince William County, student members of one school's planning team argued convincingly for the development of an advanced-level course in government, but no action was taken.

Redistribution of Authority at the School Level

Under school-based management, decision-making authority devolved to schools is generally distributed among various stakeholders at the local level. In Chapter II, three ideal-typical models were posited to describe the relative balance of power among the three principal constituencies. These include:

- The principal-control model;
- The teacher-control model; and
- The community-control model.

Although, on an abstract level, these models convey the structure of power relations among school-site actors, they are not intended as real-world representations. Nor do they encompass all stakeholders at every school site. In some districts, business representatives, students, or other constituencies also play significant roles in decision making.

School-Site Governance Bodies

School-site decision-making authority is typically structured in terms of local governance bodies, alternatively referred to as school-site councils, local school councils, planning teams, or advisory councils. Each of the six districts investigated in this study specify, to varying degrees, the composition of these local governance bodies. Many districts also establish guidelines governing their scope of authority and decision-making rules. Combined, these district-imposed requirements are an important factor in determining the relative influence of key stakeholders at the school level.

Among the six districts examined, Chicago is unique in that elected parent representatives comprise a majority on local school councils. In other sites, where union influence is strong, teachers are generally well represented. For example, in San Diego, contract provisions require that teachers constitute one-half of the membership of local governance

teams, and, in Rochester, they must constitute a majority. In the remaining three districts, central office regulations stipulate that councils must be representative of a broad range of constituencies, without specifying their precise composition.

In two districts — Chicago and Rochester — the decision-making authority of school-site councils is legally binding. In other districts, councils serve only in an advisory capacity. In these sites, the relative influence of teachers and parents is determined largely by the leadership style of individual principals and "cultural traditions" of each school.

Perceived Influence Ratings

As part of this study, key stakeholders in each district were asked to rate school-level actors in terms of their relative influence over matters pertaining to budget, staffing, and curriculum/program. Ratings of superintendents and assistant superintendents, board members, and union officials in each district, as well as principals, teachers, and parents at each school site, were averaged to provide summary measures of perceived influence.[12]

Figures V-1 through V-4 present these data, displaying mean influence ratings for the 1992-1993 school year and for the period five years past. The ratings presented in Figure V-1 demonstrate that, with the exception of Rochester (where teachers are rated first in influence), principals are perceived to be most influential overall among actors at the school level. Teachers rank second in overall influence in the remaining five districts, except in Chicago, where they are tied with parents. It is equally informative to examine changes in perceived influence over time. In Chicago and Prince Williams County, all three stakeholders have experienced a substantial increase in overall influence over the past five years. However, in Rochester, San Diego, and Santa Fe, only teachers and parents have experienced significant gains, while principals have maintained their pre-existing authority. Because school-based management has existed in Monroe County for more than two decades, the changes exhibited there over the past five years are generally less substantial. However, in this recent interval, the gains of teachers and parents have exceeded those for principals by a small margin.

Figures V-2 through V-4 present average perceived influence ratings in the specific areas of budgeting, staffing, and curriculum/program. According to these data, in Chicago, parents exercise greater influence than teachers over budgetary and staffing decisions, and, in Rochester, teachers are perceived to be somewhat more influential than principals in the area of staffing. In the area of curriculum/program, teachers are rated most influential in every district, with the exception of Monroe County, where principals are perceived to exercise the greatest control over decision making.

While these ratings demonstrate substantial variability in perceived power relationships across the six districts, information obtained at individual schools indicate that schools within the same district often display even greater variability. In Monroe County, for example, teachers at Franklin Delano Roosevelt Middle School have a long history of meaningful participation in staffing decisions, while, at Thomas Edison Elementary School, the principal has always had the last say in hiring. In Chicago, the principal at Cleveland High School has spearheaded a major "schools-within-a-school" restructuring plan, while at Andersen Elementary School, the principal's authority is all but nonexistent. According to one observer, "making a decision at this school is impossible — everyone makes his/her own decisions." Finally, in Santa Fe, the principal at Central High School has overruled teachers' attempts to introduce flexible scheduling and a strict new attendance policy, while at O'Casey Elementary School, a teacher facilitator and three coordinators have taken over the role of principal entirely.

Judging the Success of School-Based Management

Because each of the school districts examined in this study routinely collect and report data on student achievement and other outcomes at the aggregate

12 In each district site, perceived influence scores were averaged for each of six respondent groups: (1) central office administrators (i.e., superintendents, deputy superintendents, and/or assistant superintendents); (2) school board members; (3) union officials; (4) principals at the two schools visited; (5) teacher council representatives at the two schools visited (each school weighted equally); and (6) parent council representatives at the two schools visited (each school weighted equally). These six mean scores were then averaged to provide the ratings presented in Figures V-1 through V-4.

Figure V–1
Perceived Influence of Principals, Teachers, and Parents: Overall

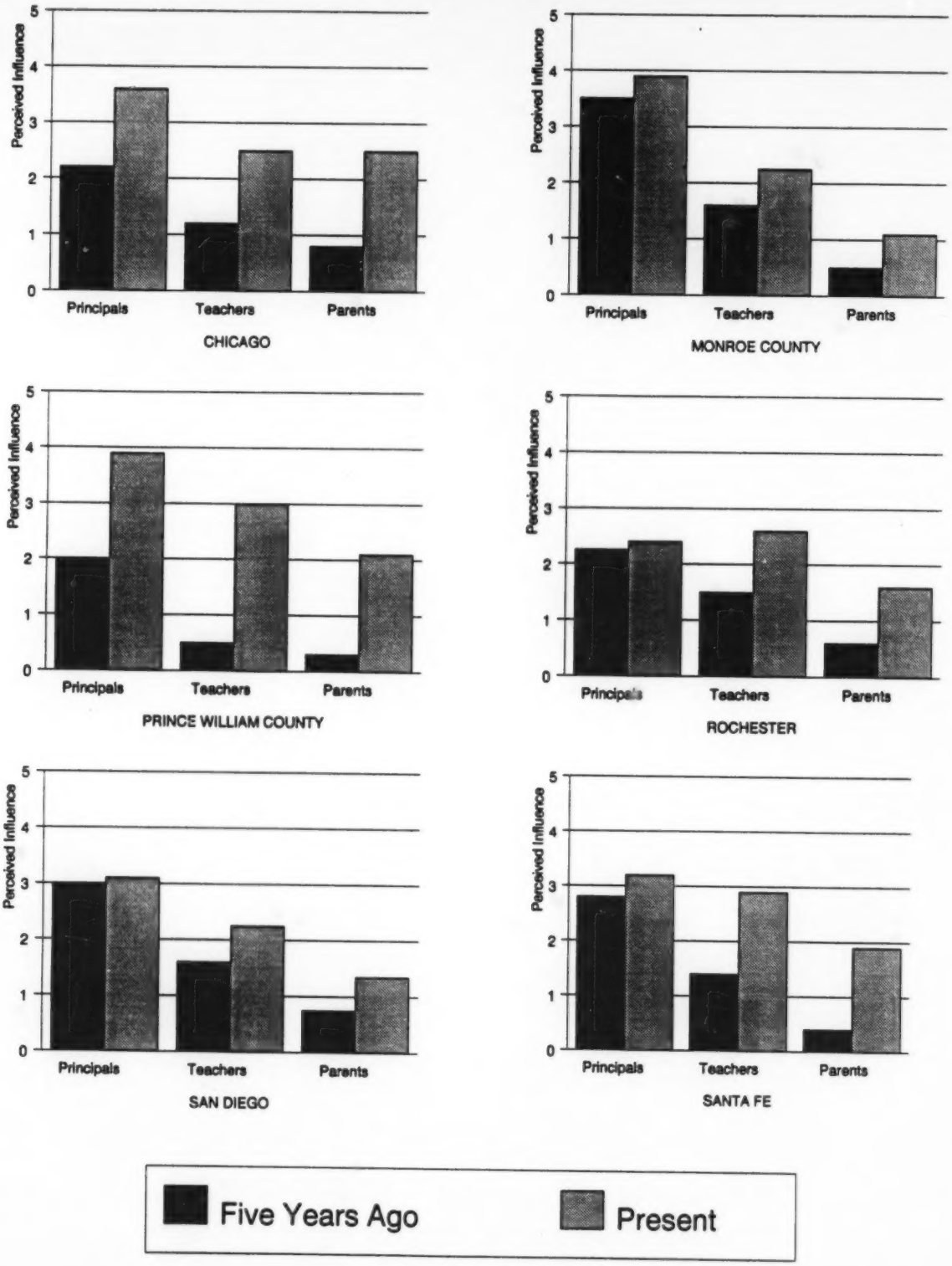


Figure V–2
Perceived Influence of Principals, Teachers, and Parents: Budgeting

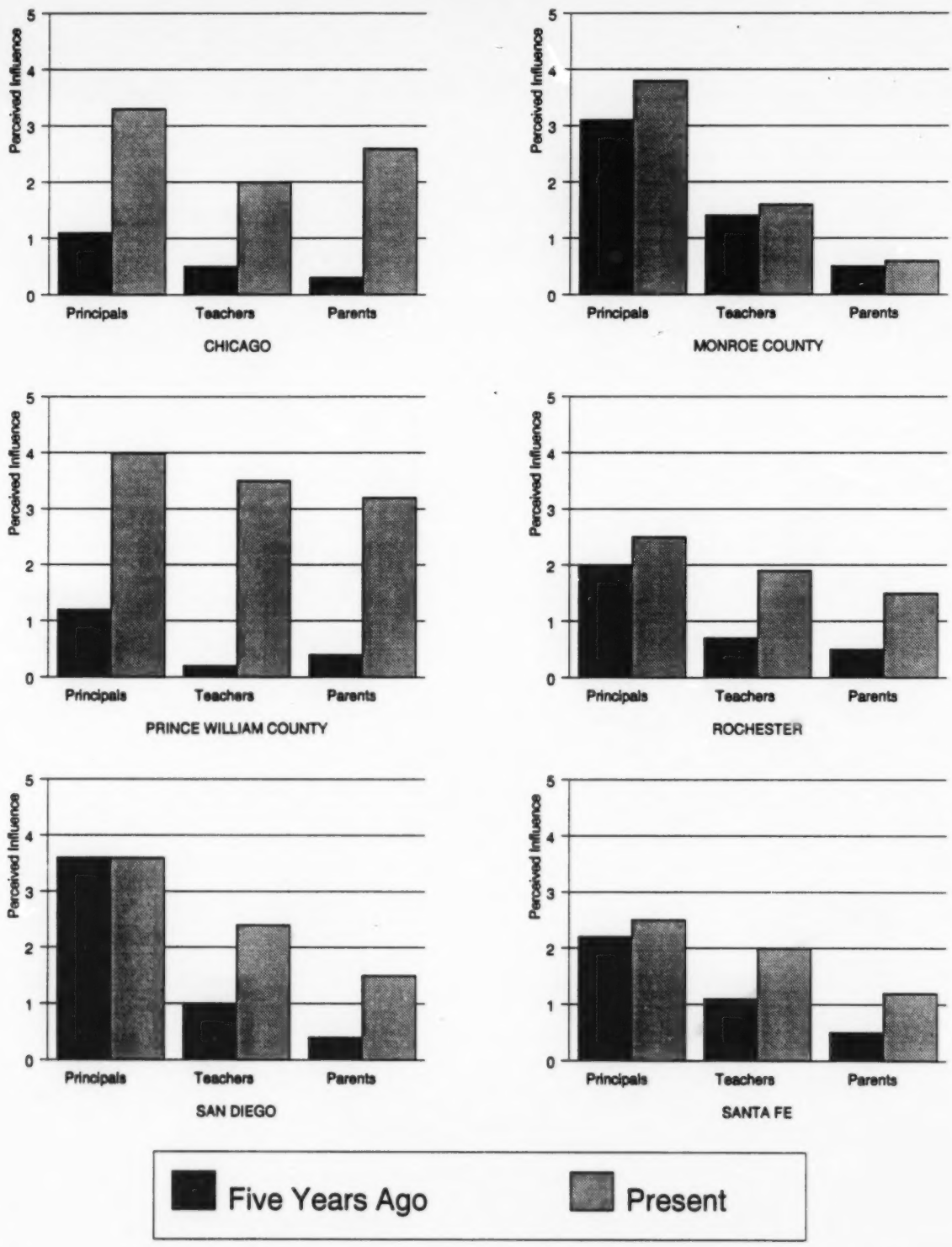


Figure V–3
Perceived Influence of Principals, Teachers, and Parents: Staffing

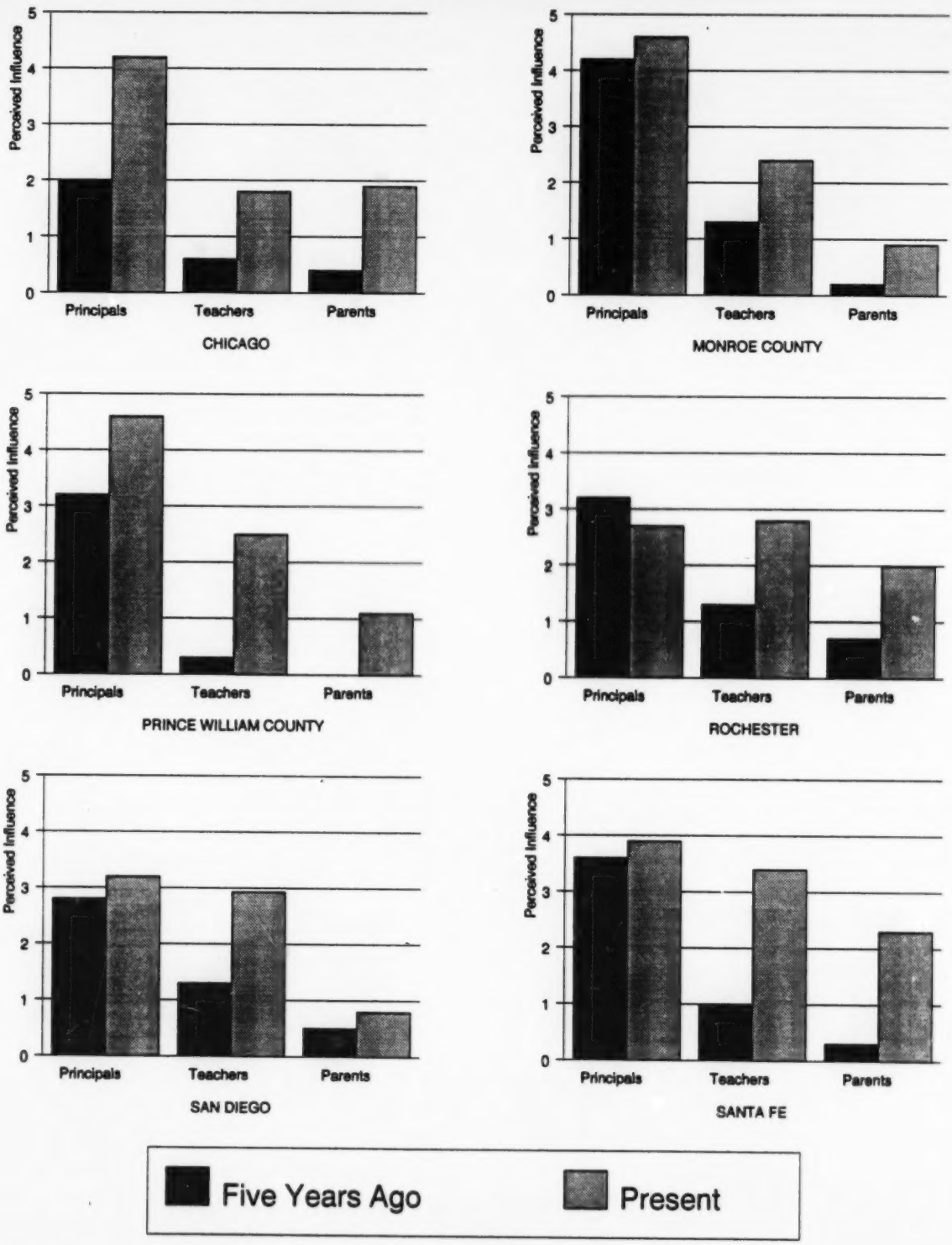
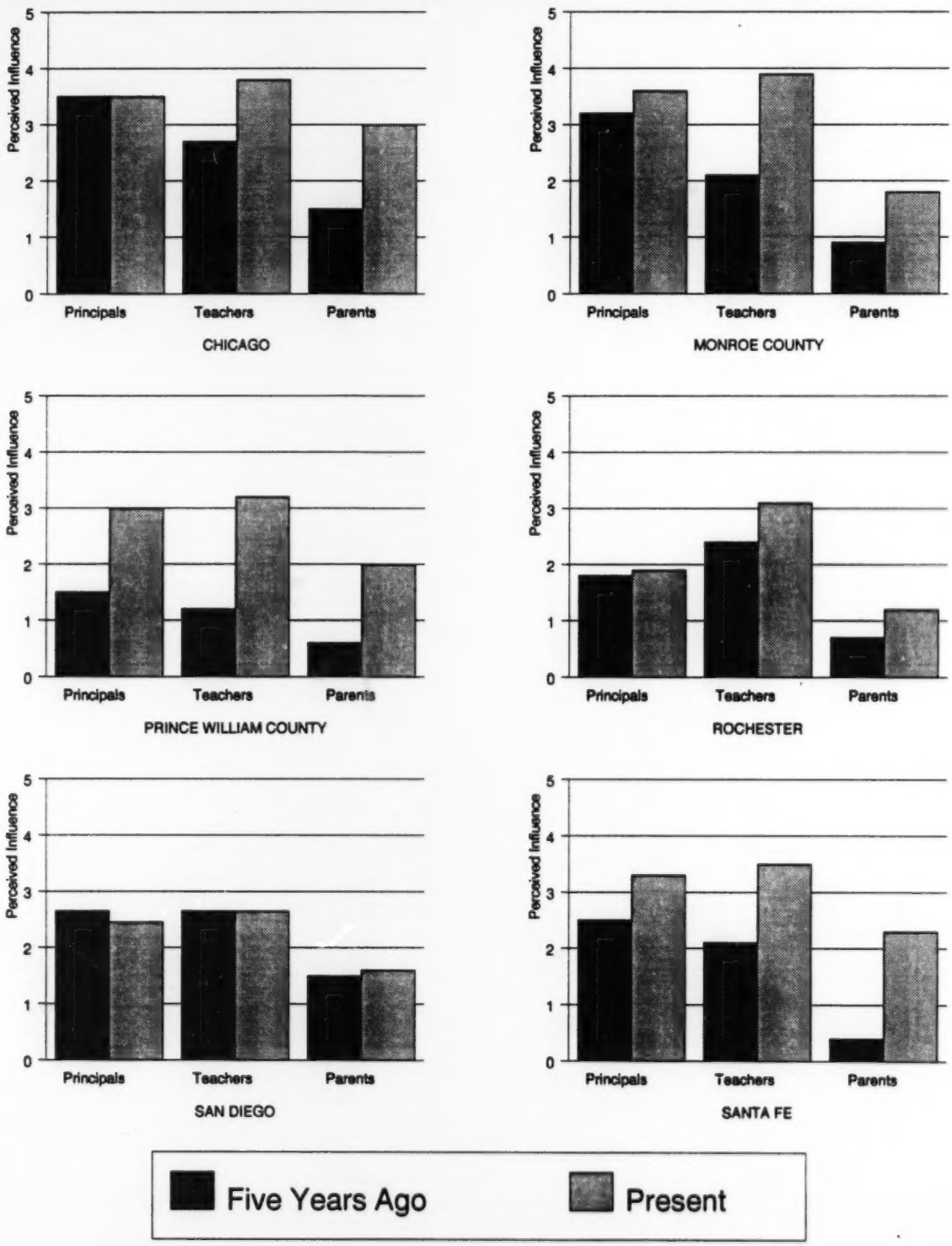


Figure V–4
Perceived Influence of Principals, Teachers, and Parents: Curriculum/Program



level, it is all but impossible to assess the effectiveness of school-based management in these critical areas. Student mobility, re-zoning, and shifting demographics combine to undermine the utility of such data in evaluating educational effectiveness. Yet, when district administrators were asked to nominate one school in their district which exemplified school-based management at its best and another that had experienced substantial difficulty in successfully implementing reform, they had little trouble doing so. Upon what criteria, then, are these assessments based?

Two factors seem to be reflected in their selections. First, at each of the exemplary schools, there is evidence of a climate of trust and mutual respect between teachers and administrators. At these schools, teachers have sought and received a significant voice in decision making, and principals have tried to create a genuine partnership with their staffs. In contrast, at those schools experiencing "difficulty," teachers and administrators were often in conflict, and principals seemed reluctant to include teachers fully in the decision-making process.[13]

A second consideration in evaluating the "success" of school-based management relates to the extent to which schools have "accomplished something." Thus, in justifying their selections, central office administrators often pointed to various intermediate outcomes, such as greater efficiency in the use of school resources, increased parental involvement, new curriculum initiatives, or a sense of enhanced teacher professionalism. While such indicators provide only a crude — and, perhaps, unreliable — barometer of success, in the absence of longitudinal student outcome data, they are the best that we have.

As part of this study, principals, teachers, and parents at each school site were asked to cite evidence of accomplishments in these "intermediate outcome" areas. Tables V-5 through V-10 present an exhaustive account of their responses. Within each outcome category, the accomplishments of schools cited as exemplary are presented first, followed by those for schools that have experienced some difficulty in implementing reform. Although, collectively, these data do suggest that the "exemplary" schools have accomplished somewhat more than "non-exemplary" schools in the areas of efficiency, parental involvement, curriculum/program, and teacher professionalism, this judgement is not consistent across all school comparisons, nor is there any evidence that these accomplishments have directly impacted student outcomes. In the absence of such evidence, these findings should be interpreted cautiously.

Factors Associated with Successful Implementation

If one accepts the criteria for judging success described in the foregoing section, one must conclude that the characteristics of individual schools play a central role in the successful implementation of reform. Although districts vary markedly in the scope and magnitude of authority devolved to schools and in the requirements that they impose to guide shared decision making at the school level, each district has its apparent successes and failures.

What, then, are the preconditions that determine the successful implementation of reform at one school and not at another? At least three factors seem to play a leading role: (1) the management style of individual principals; (2) the degree of specialized training received by school-site personnel; and (3) the organizational structure of schools.

The Principal's Role

Although, in an absolute sense, school-based management reforms have not displaced school principals from their central decision-making role in American public education, they *have* served to *elevate* the role of teachers and other stakeholders. How a principal responds to this new environment is an important factor in determining the success of reform. Those who are able to transcend their traditional management role and embrace shared decision making often see returns in the form of a reduction in conflict, enhanced administrative/faculty relationships, and an overall improvement in school climate. Those who cannot, or will not, extend decision-making authority to other constituencies are likely to encounter the opposite response.

In each of the schools cited as exemplary by district officials, the principal demonstrated his/her willingness to embrace shared decision making. Thus, it is

13 In at least two instances — Edison Elementary School in Monroe County and Armstrong Junior High School in San Diego — there was no evidence of conflict. Rather, teachers lacked a voice largely because of their satisfaction with existing administrative-faculty relations.

TABLE V–5
Intermediate Outcomes: Exemplary and Non-Exemplary Schools in San Diego

Intermediate Outcomes	San Diego Schools
Efficiency	**Hancock Elementary School:** Increased use of physical school space by teaching in rooms that had not been designated/designed as classrooms. Decreased supply expenditures by ten percent. All staff are involved with students. **Armstrong Junior High School:** No change in efficiency.
Parental Involvement	**Hancock Elementary School:** Currently supported by two parent groups that were not in existence before school-based management. **Armstrong Junior High School:** Except for increased participation through school governance council, no change in parental involvement.
Curriculum	**Hancock Elementary School:** Changed focus of curriculum from what teachers needed to what students needed. Less repetition of material from year to year. **Armstrong Junior High School:** No curricular changes implemented.
Teacher Professionalization	**Hancock Elementary School:** Teachers feel they have a voice in the governance of their school. **Armstrong Junior High School:** No increase in teacher professionalization evidenced.

TABLE V–6
Intermediate Outcomes: Exemplary and Non-Exemplary Schools in Sante Fe

Intermediate Outcomes	Santa Fe Schools
Efficiency	**Pueblo Middle School:** Reduced class size with inclusion of special education students. **Central High School:** Increased use of physical school space by teaching in rooms that had not been designated/designed as classrooms.
Parental Involvement	**Pueblo Middle School:** Community involvement has always been high; number of teacher/parent meetings has doubled. **Central High School:** Parent involvement has not increased.
Curriculum	**Pueblo Middle School:** Decision to eliminate tracking. Implementation of thematic units. **Central High School:** Implementation of easier grading. Planning implementation of portfolio assessment.
Teacher Professionalization	**Pueblo Middle School:** Approximately two hours of every school day is spent in the company of other professional staff, teaching collaboratively, planning, discussing school issues, or learning. **Central High School:** Approximately forty-five minutes of every school day is spent in the company of other professional staff, teaching collaboratively, planning, discussing school issues, or learning.

TABLE V–7
Intermediate Outcomes: Exemplary and Non-Exemplary Schools in Monroe County

Intermediate Outcomes	Monroe County Schools
Efficiency	**Frankin Delano Roosevelt Middle School:** Increased flow of information as a result of school-based management has decreased need for faculty meetings. Efficiency of staffing increased through greater utilization of teacher aides. **Thomas Edison Elementary:** Savings of $300 realized by controlling utility costs.
Parental Involvement	**Frankin Delano Roosevelt Middle School:** Over 10% increase in parent volunteers in form of teachers' aides, library workers, and tutors. **Thomas Edison Elementary:** Except for increased participation through lay advisory council, no change in parental involvement.
Curriculum	**Frankin Delano Roosevelt Middle School:** Identified need to develop sex education program. Implemented cooperative learning curriculum. **Thomas Edison Elementary:** Established after school tutorial program (K–3). Decision to place students in classes such that all classes have an equal distribution of students at different ability levels. Decision to give students who are more than two grade levels behind a grade of "F".
Teacher Professionalization	**Frankin Delano Roosevelt Middle School:** Teachers perceive that school-based management has been successful because of their participation in shared decision-making. **Thomas Edison Elementary:** Little evidence beyond teacher input into student placement for following year. Received training in cooperative learning two years ago.

TABLE V–8
Intermediate Outcomes: Exemplary and Non-Exemplary Schools in Chicago

Intermediate Outcomes	Chicago Schools
Efficiency	**Cleveland High School:** No change in efficiency. **Andersen Magnet School:** School has become less efficient due to conflicts over decision-making process.
Parental Involvement	**Cleveland High School:** Parental involvement has slightly increased. **Andersen Magnet School:** Parental involvement has not changed.
Curriculum	**Cleveland High School:** Implementation of "Schools-within-a-School" program that is oriented towards fulfilling student needs. Implementation of a new outcome-based grading policy. Increased requirements for graduation. Increased course offerings next year. **Andersen Magnet School:** Young child development program expanded.
Teacher Professionalization	**Cleveland High School:** The four "Schools-within-a School" will be self-governed by the faculty. Approximately two hours of every school day is spent in the company of other professional staff, teaching collaboratively, planning, discussing school issues, or learning. **Andersen Magnet School:** There has been no change in the level of teacher professionalization; as before reform, approximately sixty percent of all time is spent teaching collaboratively.

TABLE V–9
Intermediate Outcomes: Exemplary and Non-Exemplary Schools in Rochester

Intermediate Outcomes	Rochester Schools
Efficiency	**Jefferson Middle School:** Block scheduling has improved instructional efficiency, utility of space, and utility of supplies. **Earl Warren High School:** No change in efficiency.
Parental Involvement	**Jefferson Middle School:** Slight increase in parental involvement. **Earl Warren High School:** Except for increased participation through planning council, no change in parental involvement.
Curriculum	**Jefferson Middle School:** Implemented portfolio assessment. Developed "Multicultural Exploration" program. Developed performance-based outcomes and have geared assessment toward outcome attainment. **Earl Warren High School:** No curricular changes implemented.
Teacher Professionalization	**Jefferson Middle School:** No change in amount of time spent in the company of other professional staff, teaching collaboratively, planning, discussing school issues, or learning: approximately ninety minutes/day, on average. **Earl Warren High School:** No change in the amount of time spent in the company of other professional staff, teaching collaboratively, planning, discussing school issues, or learning: approximately one day/month, on average.

TABLE V–10
Intermediate Outcomes: Exemplary and Non-Exemplary Schools in Prince William County

Intermediate Outcomes	Prince William County Schools
Efficiency	**Pineview Elementary School:** No change in effieciency. **Chesapeake High School:** Scheduling change to modestly increase instructional time.
Parental Involvement	**Pineview Elementary School:** Parental involvement has always been high; slight improvement due to school-based management, although parental satisfaction with the school has decreased. **Chesapeake High School:** Parental involvement has increased modestly.
Curriculum	**Pineview Elementary School:** Adopted portfolio assessment. Changed curricular focus to emphasize computer skills, math skills, and manipulatives, although these changes primarily were implemented at the district level. **Chesapeake High School:** Implementation of interdisciplinary teaching teams.
Teacher Professionalization	**Pineview Elementary School:** No evidence of change in the level of teacher professionalization. **Chesapeake High School:** One fifty-five minute "planning" period a day is spent in the company of other professional staff, teaching collaboratively, planning, discussing school issues, or learning.

revealing that, when asked to name the most important qualities in an effective school administrator, these principals cited qualities such as "ability to recognize the strengths of staff and let them lead," "the ability to listen and communicate," and "the ability to facilitate the needs of staff." In contrast, principals at schools judged to be less successful often cited qualities such as "good time-management skills," "knowledge of budgets and accounting," and "leadership," all qualities reflective of traditional management roles.

Training in Collaborative Management

Another factor associated with the perceived success of school-based management reform is the degree of specialized training received by principals, teachers, and other stakeholders. The decentralization of decision making typically results in substantial role changes for all parties involved. Consequently, training in collaborative management, team skills, and consensus building is often considered to be an essential element in successful reform efforts.

Table V-11 compares exemplary and non-exemplary schools in each of the six districts studied in terms of the number of hours of specialized training in collaborative management received by school principals, teacher council representatives, and parent council representatives. According to these data, principals and council representatives at exemplary schools typically receive more training than do their counterparts at non-exemplary schools. For example, principals who administer schools judged to be successful in implementing reform average about 35 more hours of specialized training than those who administer schools that have had some difficulty.

While these data are consistent with the view that more extensive training facilitates a smoother transition to decentralized management, they are equally consistent with an alternative interpretation. That is, principals who are predisposed to pursue a vigorous course of reform may seek out such training, both for themselves and for teachers and parents involved in school-based decision making. If this is the case, then the apparent success of some schools in implementing reform may owe more to the leadership style of their principals than to the benefits of specialized training. The experience of Monroe County, where all principals were required to participate in seminars on decentralized management for a full year at the onset of reform, suggests that a positive attitude toward school-based management is not easily instilled through training alone. According to retired Superintendent Henriquez, despite this extensive training, many principals "failed to get the message" and, ultimately, were transferred to less sensitive positions in a restructured central office.

Organizational Structure of Schools

A third factor associated with the perceived success of school-based management reform relates to the organizational structure of schools. Several researchers have observed that, because secondary schools are structurally differentiated into various academic departments, teachers at this level typically view their expertise in terms of subject matter, rather than the children they teach (Bachrach et al., 1988; Anderson, 1982). These researchers suggest that teachers located in various sectors of this academic division of labor tend to lose sight of the "big picture," focusing more on their particular discipline than on students' broader educational needs. This kind of organizational segmentation also tends to produce inter-departmental rivalries which undermine faculty integration and cohesion. Thus, researchers have found that restructuring efforts in secondary schools are often less than fully comprehensive, creating new components that complement, rather than transform, schools (Marsh and Bowman, 1987).

In contrast, some have pointed out that, at the elementary school level, teachers tend to view their expertise in terms of the children they teach, rather than their particular discipline (Raudenbush and Kang, 1991; Bachrach et al., 1986). These observers further suggest that the isolation imposed by the organizational structure of elementary schools may serve to inhibit the kind of faculty integration that is essential to collaborative management.

While no studies have examined the organization structure of middle schools in relation to the implementation of school-based management reform, there are several reasons to believe that the structure of these schools may be conducive to successful reform implementation. First, the division of most middle schools into "families" or "teams" which transcend disciplinary boundaries and the attendant emphasis on integrated curricula, thematic instruction, and block scheduling, tends to promote staff integration and diffuse potential conflicts. Second, the middle school focus on student-centered learning encourages communication among faculty, which, in turn, nurtures the development of a common sense of purpose. Finally, because middle school faculty typically engage in collaborative decision making at the team or family level, the transition to school-based decision making represents a natural progression for them.

In each of the six districts examined in this study, two schools — one exemplary, the other non-exemplary — were nominated by district-level administrators. The twelve schools consisted of four high schools, three middle schools, one junior high, and four elementary schools. The distribution of exemplary and non-exemplary schools across school levels is consistent with the literature as well as with our hypothesis concerning middle schools. Only one of four high schools and two of four elementary schools were cited as exemplary, but *all three* middle schools received this distinction. Furthermore, the sole high school and one of the two elementary schools cited as exemplary exhibit certain structural features that are characteristic of middle schools. For example, Cleveland High School, in Chicago, is well on its way toward implementing a schools-within-a-school organizational plan modeled on the middle school family structure, and Hancock Elementary School, in San Diego, has introduced a new learner-centered curriculum designed to integrate instruction in science and language arts. Based on this limited sample, it would be imprudent to conclude that the organizational structure of middle schools lends itself to the successful implementation of school-based management reform. However, these findings *are* provocative and should serve to stimulate further research in this area.

Table V–11
Specialized Training in Decentralized Management Issues at Exemplary and Non–Exemplary Schools in Six Districts

School District	Average Total Number of Hours Training in Collaborative Management and Decentralized Decision Making		Average Number of Hours of Training Per Year in Decision Making, Consensus Building, Team Skills and Organizational Knowledge			
	Principals		Teacher Council Members		Parent Council Members	
	Exemplary Schools	Non–Exemplary Schools	Exemplary Schools	Non–Exemplary Schools	Exemplary Schools	Non–Exemplary Schools
San Diego	50	10	45	28	6	0
Sante Fe	20	8	8	0	0	0
Monroe County	25	45	5	12.6	0	0
Chicago	80	1.5	32.5	24	27.5	20
Rochester	24	0	0	0	24.2	2
Prince William County	90	16	22	0	5	0

CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

School-based management is still in an embryonic stage of development in most of the school districts where it exists today. In all but one of the six districts investigated in this report, measures designed to decentralize decision making were implemented within the past five years. Thus, we tend to concur with Purkey (1990), who cautions that no final judgement should be rendered concerning the effectiveness of school-based management until the "dust settles" and more empirical data become available.

This study is based on data collected in only six districts, and, therefore, its findings should be interpreted cautiously. Nonetheless, the report highlights several aspects of the current reform movement that may prove useful to educators, administrators, and researchers alike. In this final chapter, some of the study's principal findings are summarized and several suggestions for future reform efforts are put forth.

Review of Findings

The analytical framework adopted throughout this study involves two key components of decentralized management: (1) the devolution of authority from the district level to the individual school site and (2) the redistribution of that authority among school-level actors. Conclusions related to each dimension are presented below.

Devolution of Authority

The degree of authority in areas of budget, staffing, and curriculum/program devolved to individual schools under school-based management varies substantially from one district to another. Some observers have suggested that, for school-based management to be effective, schools must receive the bulk of a district's revenues in the form of lump sum allocations. However, because personnel costs comprise the largest part of any district's budget — whether site-based or centrally controlled — the more critical issue becomes, not who *pays*, but who *hires*.

With the exception of Chicago, where Local School Councils have the legal authority to hire principals, in each of the districts investigated in this report, school administrative positions are filled at the district level. While committees of stakeholders are often formed to advise in administrative hiring decisions, their recommendations are not binding. Full-time teachers and other staff are typically hired at the school level — with pro forma board approval — but, in districts where teachers' unions exert substantial influence, the hiring authority of individual schools is correspondingly reduced.

In the area of curriculum/program, in each of the districts studied, the central office typically determines *what* students are taught, while individual schools generally exercise substantial control over *how* instruction is delivered. For the most part, teachers seem content with the degree of influence that they exert in this area. This finding is consistent with earlier reports suggesting that teachers enjoy considerable influence over decisions at the classroom level, including the selection of textbooks and instructional materials, the content, topics, and skills to be taught, as well as teaching techniques.

Overall, decision-making authority remains highly centralized in the districts examined in this study. Chicago is the one exception to this rule. There, schools operate with substantial autonomy, and the role of the central office has been transformed from directive to supportive.

Redistribution of Authority

An important aspect of decentralized decision-making involves the redistribution of authority at the school level. For the most part, principals continue to play a central role in decision making, even after the implementation of school-based management reform. The manner in which these administrators respond to local reform efforts is often critical in determining their success. Those who are able to transcend their traditional management role and include other stakeholders in the decision-making process often see significant improvements in school climate and in administrative/faculty relationships.

The degree of specialized training — i.e., in collaborative management, team skills, etc. — received by school-site personnel and parents is also associated with the perceived success of reform at the school level. However, whether this reflects the effect of training or the particular leadership style of individual principals is not clear.

Finally, the organizational structure of schools seems to play a role in the success of school-based management reform. While neither the differenti-

ated character of secondary schools nor the insular nature of elementary schools tend to promote the kind of staff integration that is essential to collaborative management, the organizational structure of middle schools seems particularly conducive to the implementation of reform.

Recommendations for Reform

The findings of this study suggest several recommendations for implementing school-based management reform. These fall within six broad areas:

- The relative merits of limited versus districtwide implementation;
- Strategies for encouraging support for reform among school administrators;
- The importance of parent and student participation;
- The need for decentralizing decision-making authority within teachers' unions;
- The importance of data-driven decision making; and
- Issues concerning equity among schools.

Limited vs. Districtwide Implementation

Although school-based management has historical roots in the local school boards of nineteenth-century America, increasing centralization of control over American public education in this century has rendered the concept alien to many educators and concerned citizens. A lack of knowledge regarding the potential benefits of decentralized management combined with the lack of systematic evidence demonstrating its effectiveness have produced skeptics at every level. Such dissension can only serve to undermine the efforts of those who seek to implement such reforms.

Thus, we recommend, first, that school-based management be introduced on a voluntary, school-by-school basis, at least until sufficient evidence is compiled to support its implementation across entire districts. Among the districts examined in this study, only two introduced school-based management on a voluntary basis initially, and even these districts required districtwide participation before the success of restructuring could be demonstrated. Based on countless discussions with school-site actors in the six districts examined, the irony — if not the hypocrisy — of having site-based decision making mandated from the top down is not lost on those affected by reform. A more deliberate, measured approach to implementing school-based management reform would likely prove less threatening to stakeholders at all levels, reduce resistance, and allow time for the benefits of restructuring to be demonstrated.

Encouraging Support Among School Principals

In every district studied, the response of individual school principals to school-based management reform proved to be a key factor in determining the success of restructuring at the school level. Although the data presented in this study support the view that specialized training may be useful in instilling principals with value orientations conducive to collaborative management, they can as easily be read the other way. That is, principals with management styles supportive of shared decision making may simply seek out such training, both for themselves and for their staffs.

Thus, if values conducive to school-based management are to be encouraged among school administrators, it may take more than intensive training. Many principals pointed out that it is both unrealistic and inequitable to expect school administrators to share authority, but not responsibility. Broadening the base of accountability might be a necessary complement to the effective implementation of school-based management reform. Finally, if principals are to transcend traditional management roles, they must perceive that they will be rewarded for their efforts to include other school-site constituencies in the decision-making process.

Parent and Student Participation

With the exception of Chicago, where parents exercise decision-making authority that is perceived to be commensurate with that of teachers, parents generally have less than a full voice under school-based management in the decisions affecting their children. To some degree, this is due to parents themselves. Conditioned to be consumers, rather than participants, in the educational process, most parents seem content to leave the critical decisions to the professionals. However, schools could and should encourage more parental participation than they presently do. In particular, specialized training in collaborative management should be provided for parent council representatives, surveys should be routinely employed to gather valuable information about the concerns of parents (especially the silent majority) and, wherever possible, parents should be made to feel an integral part of the school community.

Students, particularly in secondary schools, should also be given a greater voice in the decisions that affect them. In the course of our site visits, some of the most insightful criticisms of school-based management came from children — not only those 16 and 17 years of age, but also those who were 13, 14, and 15. In Prince William County, students at one high school put forth a cogent argument for the development of an advanced course in government, only to be overruled by adult professionals who felt that the plan undermined the school's commitment to heterogeneous grouping. And, in Santa Fe, students' complaints that a new program of thematic instruction did not adequately prepare them for high stakes tests such as the SAT also seemed to fall on deaf ears. In these and countless other instances, students demonstrated their ability to engage themselves in the decision-making process in a constructive manner. Thus, under the current reform, students remain a relatively untapped resource of valuable information and useful insights into the educational process. A greater effort should be made to include them more fully in the formulation of policies at the school level.

Restructuring Teachers' Unions

Teachers' unions have exercised varying degrees of influence over the shape of school-based management in the six districts studied. In Monroe County, Prince William County, and Santa Fe, the role of teachers unions has been minimal. In Chicago, the Chicago Teachers' Union (CTA) strike of 1987 — the largest public employee strike in Illinois history — fueled the fires of reform and, ultimately, placed the union at a distinct disadvantage in the ensuing reform negotiations. Although the CTA supported a site-based management concept dominated by teachers in partnership with administrators (and in consultation with parents), reform legislation gave the upper hand to parents. Finally, in Rochester and San Diego, teachers' unions have directly shaped reform efforts through collective bargaining.

It is in these latter two districts that we find evidence of the emerging paradox that strong centralized unions increasingly face in a landscape of decentralized authority. On the one hand, these unions have succeeded in empowering teachers at the school level by influencing the composition of school-site councils, while, on the other hand, they have effectively limited the authority of individual schools by negotiating restrictive seniority clauses in union contracts. Although there is no ready-made model for what an effective teachers' union should look like in this new environment, it seems likely that some degree of decentralization of decision-making authority within unions must accompany the decentralization of authority within school districts. As in the case of school restructuring, some decisions could be delegated to union representatives at the school site (e.g., the authority to grant waivers to seniority agreements), while others might be more effectively retained at the district level (e.g., salary negotiations).

Data-Driven Decision Making

If school-based management is to serve as a mechanism for increasing educational effectiveness, reliable student outcome data must be routinely collected and made available to school-site decision makers. However, our site visits revealed that this is often not the case. First, all too often, data are inaccessible, and, even when readily available, they tend to be in a form that limits their usefulness. For example, in each of the districts studied, standardized achievement test data are collected and reported annually, but, because they are aggregated to the school and district level, actual changes in student achievement are confounded with changes reflecting compositional differences due to student mobility, making it impossible to evaluate the effectiveness of specific instructional programs. Without the ability to monitor outcomes more effectively, it is difficult to imagine how any form of management, school-based or otherwise, can be expected to effect meaningful change. As an alternative to the present approach, we recommend that districts routinely collect pre- and post-test data and report trends (at the school and district levels) for student "panels" that remain constant over time. Data on other student outcomes — attendance, suspensions, etc. — should be collected and reported in a similar manner.

Ensuring Equity Among Schools

A major challenge of school-based management reform is that of ensuring equity across school sites. In part, inequities may occur as a result of resource allocation formulas and budgeting processes that favor one school over another. In Chapter V, we observed that smaller schools — with greater relative fixed costs — may suffer inequities under lump sum, per pupil allocation formulas. In addition, when schools must budget for both salary and non-salary expenditures, schools with more experienced and more highly trained staffs may be at a disadvantage if they must incur actual, rather than average, personnel costs. In Prince William County, schools pay for personnel according to a scheme which divides faculty and staff into various costs categories. However, this system may encourage inefficiency,

since there is no incentive to consider real costs in making staffing decisions. Perhaps the best solution is to encourage efficiency by requiring schools to pay actual costs for staff hired after the implementation of site-based budgeting, while ensuring equity by employing average costs for personnel hired prior to reform.

Other inequities among schools may occur in the allocation of human capital, particularly where parents play a significant role in school governance. Under Chicago's reform, parents represent a majority of Local School Councils and, hence, play a decisive role in shaping school policy. To the extent that the quality of leadership that a council provides is reflective of the training and experience of its members, inequities are inevitable. Districts implementing reform are thus encouraged to provide extensive supplementary training for parents of disadvantaged background who serve on school governance councils.

In a broader sense, inequity in school performance is an expected and natural outcome of decentralized control over public education. Advocates of free choice may argue that this represents a favorable outcome, since only the better schools would survive the rigors of competition. It seems equally likely, however, that the most disadvantaged families would continue to send their children to local schools, even in the face of evidence of their relative decline. District officials should, therefore, be prepared to intervene where necessary, reasserting centralized control in the worst cases of school nonperformance. In Chicago, this alternative is prescribed by law, and, in San Diego, accountability measures currently under discussion include the possibility of placing schools in receivership for failure to meet district standards.

A Final Note

As a reform movement, school-based management is still in its infancy. Several schools in the six districts examined in this study have focused on little more than governance issues since their restructuring. Others have begun to take the first steps toward meaningful change — particularly in terms of teacher professionalism and administrative-faculty relations — and exhibit a growing sense of optimism. Ultimately, however, school-based management will be judged, not by its impact on school climate or other intermediate effects, but rather by its ability to improve the educational experience of America's youth.

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